
The
Flying Buccaneer

JACK BINNS



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THE FLYING BUCCANEER

THE FLYING BUCCANEER

A Novel of Adventure in the Skies

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BY
JACK BINNS /

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NICHOLAS L. BROWN
NEW YORK, :: 1923

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THE FLYING BUCCANEER

CHAPTER ONE

“OH! George, something terrible has happened. You must read the paper right away.”

Mrs. George Cowl, wife of the Secretary of Air, in a state of great excitement met her husband at the foot of the stairs as he descended, and handed him a copy of the *Washington Tribune*.

“Look at this!” she exclaimed.

Taking the proffered newspaper Cowl's eyes fell immediately upon the eight column “banner” line spread across the front page:

TRANSPACIFIC MAIL AIRSHIP DESTROYED BY AERIAL
PIRATE IN MIDOCEAN

Quickly he read the sub-heads, which told in terse sentences a story of piracy in the Twentieth Century more amazing than any exploit of the roving buccaneers who struck terror through the Spanish Main two hundred years ago.

*Giant Rigid Airship Langley Shot Down Midway
between Honolulu and Manila from Altitude
of 10,000 feet.*

*Survivors Picked Up by Cargo Steamer
Yang-Tsze.*

*Masked Aerial Pirate Escapes with Valuable
Cargo Taken from Langley.*

“Good God!” he exclaimed, then turning to his wife, he added, “I’ll have to go right over to the office, Dear.”

Snatching his hat, Cowl hurriedly kissed his wife, and then rushed out, leaving his breakfast untouched. He ran as he had not run for years across the streets to the office in the government building, dodging the early morning traffic and miraculously escaping injury.

Breathlessly, he dashed into the elevator, to the astonishment of Jim the night caretaker who had not yet been relieved.

“Take me right up Jim,” he shouted.

Before the caretaker could close the doors of the elevator, Theodore Mitchell, the Assistant Secretary of Air rushed in, as excited as his chief. The two men looked at each other for several seconds with an expression of utter bewilderment written across their faces. In one momentary flash each read the other’s thoughts, and then Mitchell broke out:

“It’s evident that you’ve read the paper, George, or you wouldn’t be here so early. What do you think of it?”

“I don’t know yet,” replied Cowl, “I just glanced over the headlines and rushed right over. I haven’t read the report yet. I hurried here to see whether we had been officially ad-

vised of it.”

When the elevator stopped on the tenth floor, the two men rushed out and ran into Cowl’s office.

“You read the newspaper account, while I call up the telegraph office,” said Mitchell.

Cowl sat down somewhat nervously, and began to read:

Manila, P. I., Sept. 26, 1952.—(By Associated Press.) The mail airship Langley flying from Yokohama to San Francisco was attacked and shot down by a mysterious airplane yesterday, according to a brief wireless dispatch received here from the Captain of the steamer Yang-Tsze. The passengers and crew of the Langley were picked up by the Yang-Tsze which is proceeding to this port.

The mysterious airplane which attacked the airship flew away in a northeasterly direction after removing all the valuable cargo and sinking the disabled airship.

The details of this act of piracy are contained in a later wireless report sent by Captain Caruthers, commander of the Langley, from the Yang-Tsze to Captain Deverest, commander of the naval district, in this city. This report as given out here reads as follows:

“September 25th, Airship Langley flying on a course due East in Latitude 20.35 N., Longitude 170.45 E., overtaken by large airplane of flying boat type. Without warning airplane opened fire at one thousand yards using three inch incendiary shells from automatic cannon.

“Third shell penetrated valve in number three ballonnet, releasing helium gas. Firing commenced while Langley flying at altitude of 10,000 feet. Langley began to settle, and I ordered colors hoisted as distress signal. Airplane then ceased firing.

“Langley rapidly settled to surface. Attacking airplane spiralled down, landed approximately same time as Langley, and then proceeded in hailing distance. Commander and crew of airplane all wore peculiar mask-like helmets. Former ordered us to launch boats and abandon Langley.

“Sea smooth, no wind. Boats launched from disabled Langley without difficulty, and passengers taken off quietly and in good order. Commander of airplane ordered us to lay off half a mile from Langley. Soon as transfer of passengers complete, I ordered officers in charge of each lifeboat to obey this command, as attacking airplane had assumed threatening attitude.

“Crew of airplane boarded Langley, and were observed removing part of cargo. This continued half an hour, then airplane lay off two hundred yards and opened fire on envelope of Langley with its three inch cannon. Langley disappeared below surface a few seconds after the fifth shot was fired.

“Airplane then came over to our boats, and her commander megaphoned across that he would wireless for assistance. He then took off. Half an hour later he returned, and informed

us that he had sighted a steamer 15 miles SSE of us, and had requested her to come to our assistance, giving our position.

“The airplane again took off and disappeared in a Northeasterly direction at terrific speed. One hour later cargo steamer Yang-Tsze hove in sight and picked us up. Entire ship’s company unharmed, and passengers all well. Attacking airplane bore no international marks, or anything of an identifying character.”

It is understood that Captain Carruthers included a complete and detailed description of the piratical airplane in his wireless report, but Captain Deverest here refused to make public that portion of the dispatch on the ground that it was confidential official information.

The remarkable incident has caused quite a stir here, and the aerial transport companies are considering the advisability of cancelling all schedules until adequate protection of the airways has been established by the Department of Air in Washington.

Officials of the Trans-Pacific and Oriental Aerial Line, owners of the Langley, have cabled details of the affair to the head office at San Francisco and requested that the Westbound airship Wilbur Wright, which is due to leave early tomorrow morning, be held up until the government puts effective patrol units along the course. The officials were doubtful, however, whether the cable would arrive in time.

CHAPTER TWO

Scarcely had Cowl finished reading the newspaper story when the door of his office opened and Mitchell entered with Arthur G. Ingleton, the Secretary of the Navy. The latter's worried expression seemed to indicate that the gravity of the situation was even greater than was apparent from the newspaper report. Looking at his colleague, he said:

"This is a pretty serious situation, George. I've just received a cipher cable from Deverest at Manila giving me complete details of the affair. From his description of the pirate it looks as though we have got a pretty desperate character to deal with. His airplane appears to be something entirely new.

"I am greatly worried, because as you know Mrs. Ingleton and Mary are due to leave for the Philippines on the Wilbur Wright this morning. I have got a long distance call in to San Francisco, trying to stop them from leaving until we get this fellow. We can't hold up the commercial lines, but there is no telling where he will strike next. I have cabled Deverest to make temporary arrangements to police the airways with naval units until we make some or-

ganized effort to hunt this desperado.

“My chief anxiety is for Mary, because I doubt whether I shall reach her in time to prevent her departure on the Wilbur Wright. She has had her heart set on this Orient trip for the past six months. Here’s Deverest’s report. I’ve had it deciphered. You read it while I try to get the long distance operator again.”

Cowl took the message while Ingleton went back to his own office to telephone. The message contained the report of Captain Carruthers as given in the newspaper account, but included the following description of the pirate machine, which was withheld from the press.

“Carruthers report shows the attacking airplane unlike any known design. He states it was a monoplane flying boat, apparently of metal construction throughout. The boat body was squat and wide, but entirely enclosed. It had the appearance of being constructed of plates riveted together like a steamship. Length of boat approximately 105 feet. Tail construction seemed to be very small, but otherwise conventional. Spread of wings about 110 feet, and chord (width) about 11 feet. Wing was internally braced and was two feet thick at a point two feet from leading edge. Wing covering also had appearance of plates riveted together.

“It is equipped with a disappearing marine screw propeller for cruising purposes on the surface of the ocean. In the air it is driven forward by two pusher propellers, but according

to Carruthers who examined it carefully, there is no sign of any engine housing, and just where the engines are located he could not determine. It was equipped with a three inch automatic cannon, on a disappearing mount over the nose of the enclosed hull. The airplane apparently is capable of prodigious speed, that Carruthers could not account for."

Mitchell had read the report over his chief's shoulder.

"It doesn't tell us very much, does it?" he queried.

A few minutes later Ingleton returned, having failed to get his call. The operator had told him there would be an hour's delay. His frantic appeal that it was an urgent government call had failed to expedite matters. To Cowl he said:

"Judging from that report, George, we have a pretty hard task before us, and the only way to handle that brigand will be by means of a thoroughly organized plan. As I said, I have told Deverest to use the naval units to take care of the Eastern Pacific airways, and I shall cable Smith at Honolulu as well as Harrington at San Francisco to put all their craft on patrol duty. You had better send similar orders to your commanders, don't you think?"

At this moment Air Marshall Charles B. Hartley, military director of the Air Service, entered the room in a state of suppressed excitement.

"I would willingly give up my commission, if

only Joe Levanter were here now," he said. "He was by far the best man we had, and would have been just the one for this job. He was a regular daredevil, but at the same time shrewder than anybody else in the service. I can't imagine what became of him."

The four officials then held a conference to decide their plans. After some considerable discussion Ingleton jumped up, and started to leave the room saying as he went:

"I am so worried about Mary and her mother. I am trying to get them off the airship before it leaves. I am going to try and get San Francisco again. I'll be back shortly."

CHAPTER THREE

The scene of activity that marks the pending departure of a trans-oceanic airship was being enacted at the great airport of San Francisco just as the first streaks of dawn broke over the Eastern sky. At the peak of terminal tower number six, one thousand feet above the ground, the airship Wilbur Wright was moored by its nose. The airship moved slowly and sluggishly back and forth in a small arc of a circle whenever the fitful breeze caught its glistening sides, as though it were a mammoth weathercock indicating the direction of the wind.

The top of the tower was a huge revolving globe with a vast socket on one side. It was in this socket that the nose of the airship was automatically locked, the entire tower being a mooring post that enabled the airship to swing to the action of the wind in the same manner that a steamship swings on its anchor chain to the action of the tide.

Upon the airship the rigging crew was busily engaged in unscrewing the feed pipes from the gas valves, after the last volume of helium gas had been taken into the ballonets. The buoyancy of the gas naturally kept the giant airship

afloat in the sea of air and relieved the tower from all strain of the ship's great weight.

Through the center of the tower was a shaft for passenger and freight elevators. The latter were running at maximum speed, taking up the last pieces of cargo.

On the aerodrome below, the big transcontinental passenger airplane had just landed on the concrete runway after a fifteen hour non-stop flight through the night from New York. It taxied over to the landing platform at the foot of the tower, after the pilot had drawn up the retractible wings to the sides of the fuselage.

As it drew alongside the landing platform, a door in the side of the fuselage swung open, and the workers on the platform put out a gang-plank to the door. The passengers then filed out, carrying their small hand baggage. They walked into the waiting hall inside the base of the tower. Here was situated the restaurant, wireless station, and all other facilities necessary to a terminal station.

Immediately after disembarking the passengers trooped into the restaurant and ate breakfast, while the terminal employes were busily engaged in taking their baggage up to the airship.

Among the passengers who had just arrived on the trans-continental airplane were Mrs. Ingleton, wife of the Secretary of the Navy, and her daughter Mary. With them was Wing Commander Kenneth Fitzgerald, an aviation officer

who had been transferred from a departmental executive job at Washington to the command of the air station at Manila. He was on his way to take over his new command in the East.

In Washington he had been a close friend of the Secretary of the Navy and his family, and very naturally Mr. Ingleton had asked the commander to look after Mrs. Ingleton and Mary during their voyage, since all three were bound for the same destination by the same ship.

Together with the other passengers the three entered the restaurant and breakfasted.

Mary Ingleton, was a prepossessing athletic young lady imbued with the full sense of importance of her twenty-two Summers. From the moment of her debut she had been one of the reigning bells in Washington society, with all the eligible young men of the Capital in her retinue as willing slaves.

She was a blonde with a crowning aureole of golden tinged hair and her big flashing blue eyes gave a true indication of the independence that formed the basis of her character. She was rather tall. Her features were regular, perfect and charming.

She had been the principal of a hundred romances. All these, however, were but minor incidents that came and went to form the background of her life.

Suddenly Washington was confronted with the fact that Mary, the acknowledged queen, had quit her domain, at the height of her triumphal conquests, to travel for no apparent purpose in

the Orient. Her departure, so unexpected, set the tongues of gossip and jealousy awagging. The coincidence of Fitzgerald's appointment to the Eastern station was developed to the fullest extent of its possibilities in the small talk that followed. Six months previously, it was recalled, Joe Levanter, the dashing young aviator had disappeared, and he had been one of Mary's most persistent admirers. He had vanished as completely as though the earth had swallowed him up.

Since his disappearance, pointed out gossip, there was no doubt about the change that had come over Mary. From the central figure in the varied activities of social life she had changed into a recluse and had begun to take her pleasure more seriously.

With the characteristic imperturbability of youth Mary had remained oblivious to the covert glances and whispered remarks of those about her. But there was more than mere imperturbability that made her gaze so indifferent, her actions so apathetic. She was absorbed in a process of self-study that claimed all her mental energies. Stubbornly and deeply she was questioning something, probing something, prying into something. This something, though but a memory now, she endeavored to recreate into a present reality. And in her tireless effort to make the past live again in the present she sought an opportunity to reexamine and reappraise her actions. Were they altogether right? What possible effect did or will they have on

her future? How was she to gain that ease and tranquility of mind that seem to be the result as well as the reward of making a right decision. Has her opportunity come and gone? Will she ever have another? She did not know, and the less she knew the more she thought and speculated on the subject.

Her mind dwelt continuously upon a scene that six months previously had made a profound impression upon her. From the moment of its enactment she had been in the grip of that mental self-absorption until it began to affect her even outwardly so seriously that her parents had willingly consented to her eastern trip.

Even now in the transoceanic air terminal for the first time, Mary's mind, unaffected by the sights that were novel to her, reverted to the occasion that had persistently beset her. In her mind's eye she pictured for the hundredth time the incident with Joe Levanter that was the direct cause of her present unplanned journey. Mary was uneasy mentally. She was not sure that she hated Levanter, nor was she sure that she loved him. Of one thing only was she certain, and that was she could not be indifferent to the memory of their last meeting.

He was indeed a remarkable young man who had precipitated within her strange, mixed feelings that she could not define. She remembered the last call he made upon her at her home in Washington. Back upon the screen of her memory there flashed again a moving picture which portrayed every incident of that momentous eve-

ning. She saw herself stroll out of the house with him across the porch to the rustic seat back of the lawn. She again saw him go through the impassioned gestures of his proposal, and her ears—deaf to the multitudinous noises around her—again heard his words repeated from the indelible record impressed upon her mind.

“Mary, if you will only say yes the world shall be yours and mine. I have just done something wonderful that will bring me great fame, and I want you to share it with me. Won’t you say the word that will make me forever happy, dear?”

She again saw his coal black eyes peering straight at her with a penetrating gaze, and the living intenseness stamped upon his face. She saw herself held immovable by the equal strength of the opposing forces that were battling within her. She saw herself transfixed in this pose of painful indecision for what seemed to be eternity, until the sound of his voice again broke through her reverie.

“Mary, I must have your answer now, this very minute, my life, my future—everything depends upon it.”

Then as in a dream she heard herself repeat the momentous “No” that escaped from her lips before she realized she had spoken. Why she had said it she did not know then, and the constant introspection of the past six months had failed to produce a reason. Was it the spontaneous response of intuition?

Daily for six months she had reviewed the scene, and yet even now, as on the day of its occurrence she gave an involuntary start as she thought of the effect produced by her refusal. She again saw the quick change that came over Levanter, the rage that suddenly lit up his olive brown features and shone from his eyes. She again heard him as he spoke with suppressed fury in his voice:

“Mary I love you. I still love you, but evidently to you my feeling has been nothing but a pleasant diversion. You have played with it, encouraged it. You have led me to believe that there was more than hope for me. And now you coldly dash that hope to pieces, knowing full well that it has been the moving principle of all my plans, of all my efforts. . . . I don’t know what is going to happen to me. But I know one thing. You cannot by a mere word detach yourself from the fate which you and I have been preparing for ourselves. Whether with me or away for me, you too shall bear the responsibility for my future as you bore it for my past, and shall feel the effects of whatever is in store for me.”

“Good bye, Mary, but don’t forget. I shall not.”

As Mary, still enthralled, saw with her mental eye the stalwart frame leaping over the fence back of the lawn, she felt a tug at her arm. Turning around she passed from the realm of memory to that of actuality in the person of her mother who was exclaiming:

“Why, Mary, you haven’t touched your breakfast, dear. What are you thinking of, child? Come now, we shall have to hurry, for the ship is leaving in a few minutes.”

Almost automatically Mary began to eat impelled by duty rather than appetite. She listened attentively while Fitzgerald with the fervor of an expert was explaining everything about the station. His own branch of aeronautics was concerned chiefly with the lighter than air types of air vessels, and he was now in his very element, anxious to impart his knowledge to his fair ward.

Breakfast over, the three walked from the restaurant to the elevator and ascended with other passengers to the landing platform at the top of the tower. There a steward took their baggage and escorted them along the alleyway to their cabins. As soon as they had located themselves Fitzgerald took them to the observation room, and secured for them a favorable window seat where they could watch the departure of the great airship.

The view unfolded before their enraptured gaze was unforgettable. One thousand feet below they saw the glories of the island-strewn San Francisco Bay. It was spread out beneath them like a map. They saw its shores, and those of San Pablo Bay. They saw the magnificent rivers Sacramento and San Joaquin emptying their streams into the beautiful bay. A few miles to the north Mount Tamalpais towered

above them. On the hazy horizon of the Pacific they could just make out the Farallones. Directly below, the hilly city appeared almost flat.

Meanwhile the airship was making ready to leave. The six engines were now running slowly, but the propellers were locked in a horizontal position. The captain, megaphone in hand, and his officers were on the bridge waiting to give the signal to cast off. Friends of the passengers were grouped about the balcony beneath the mooring globe, waving flags and handkerchiefs.

Finally the agent of the line left the airship. The captain rang an order to the engine room, and a moment later the changeable pitch propeller on the after engine nacelle was thrown into reverse and commenced to revolve slowly. Then through the megaphone the captain shouted the order to the employes on the tower: "Let go!"

The engineer on the pier touched a button, and the electric machinery, moving with swift-ness and precision, released the clutch that held the airship to the tower. The reversed propeller pulled the giant frame clear of the tower before it could rise. A few moments later the buoyancy of the helium gas had lifted it to an altitude of ten thousand feet.

The watchers on the balcony saw the ship turn slowly in a circle, and then with gathering speed swiftly float to the western horizon. As the last farewell cheer died away the telephone bell in the main office rang. A clerk reached

leisurely over and lifted the receiver to his ear. He uttered a languid "hello!" A voice came back immediately: "We have a rush long distance call from Washington for Miss Mary Ingleton, a passenger on the airship Wilbur Wright," it said.

"Too late," replied the clerk, "the ship has just gone."

CHAPTER FOUR

When Joe Levanter left Mary's home on the day of their final parting he felt a sense of vacuous misery overpowering him. All at once he became aware of the fact that he had no one to turn to, no one to care or live for. All his dreams, his youth, his past full of ardor and promise had been swept away from him, it seemed, by the single movement of a woman's arm. What this arm had meant to him as a sustaining prop for his ambitions he realized only now, when a sort of dull, flat weakness filled his frame.

He entered his comfortably furnished apartment in one of the fashionable homes of the capital and threw himself on a sofa, burying his head in the cushion, as if wishing to escape the dark and crushing force of his depression.

For the first time in his life he faced existence without a set purpose, without energy, without zest. He was a brilliant aeronautical engineer, the inventor of many remarkable devices which revolutionized the construction of airplanes. He was a daring pilot. He was also engaged in conducting experiments with a new type of air

vessel of his own invention which was considered of utmost importance by the United States government in whose employ he was. He was internationally known as one of the most original and successful builders of airships. His name was uttered with respect by scientists in every country, and the whole aeronautical world expected further and even more splendid achievements of him. He was genuinely loved and admired by his colleagues, while to those who were assigned to assist him in his laboratory work and field tests he was an ideal superior and companion at the same time. But all this work and glory, all this popularity, these personal and social triumphs brought him no consolation in this hour of anguish, so keen, so humiliating.

There was his fame of course. But of late it had become a source of embarrassment to him that was as unusual as it was unwarranted. For some time he had been the recipient of letters from unknown people residing in various parts of Europe and South America, who professed a great interest in the work he was doing. In a subtle but persistent manner these people hinted that with his genius and courage he could make his work the foundation of a material prosperity far greater than he could possibly achieve as a mere government employee. The letters came at regular intervals and bore the seals of apparently well situated and even noble personages. The last letter he received contained a request for a personal interview to

discuss a matter, which the writer was certain would prove of interest to Levanter and might rebound to the advantage of all parties concerned. Levanter was informed that unless he definitely made known his unwillingness to see the party seeking an audience with him, the latter would call at his residence where it was hoped there would be laid the beginning of what was certain to prove an amicable as well as profitable association.

This, by some strange association, flashed in his mind as he lay a prey to disillusion and despondency. Helpless protest stirred somewhere between the intermittent gleams of conscious self-analysis. Defiance and hatred occasionally welled up within his breast. But the confusion and intensity of the reactions made Levanter feel only more dejected, and with listless resignation he abandoned himself to the tortures of his soul.

As he thus lay and grappled with the shadows of despair the door bell rang. Being alone in the house, he was forced to get up and open the door. A tall man, immaculately dressed, asked if Mr. Levanter was at home and whether he could be seen alone. When the latter introduced himself as the gentleman in question, the stranger was visibly affected and, making a low bow, said he was Monsieur de Ribaud of Marseilles who had asked for the interview. Levanter invited him in.

After a short pause the visitor said:

"I have come here on an important mission. I represent an international group of investors who are anxious to secure your cooperation and guidance in a very profitable undertaking."

"What is it?" Levanter asked.

The visitor looked at Levanter intently for some time, then answered:

"It is something that will demand the greatest courage and grit. But we know you have that. Mr. Levanter, have you ever thought of the tremendous riches that is now being carried in airships across seas and continents and oceans? It is a booty worthy of the bravest.

Levantier, astonished, made no reply.

"You are a genius, Mr. Levanter, and genius knows no law. Can you be satisfied with the paltry offering of the mediocre whom you yourself teach how to be rich and powerful, when you yourself have it in your power to command all? . . . Why should you live this life of small reward and duty, when you can make a whole world your own? You are the master of the air. There is no one to dispute your supremacy. Your knowledge and skill have built and operated marvelous machines for others, why not use your abilities for yourself? We propose to pay you your own price for the invention you are now working on. We offer you all the money you want for the construction of airplanes for our operations. And we invite you to become the head of our organization which has every chance of success on its side. Are these

terms fair enough? I shall not press you for a decision right now. Whenever you are ready let me know at the following address (cffering his card) and we shall have no trouble arranging the details. . . . Meanwhile we must part. Good bye, Mr. Levanter. We hope to hear from you.”

Monsieur de Ribaud rose and left. Levanter remained sitting in the same position, dazed by the offer and its prospects.

He sat thus all evening and through a long and dreary night. He thought of his eventful past and of his contemplated future. He thought of the woman whose lovely face seemed to link the two, only to mock and torment him and to deprive him of both. He thought of fleeing and secluding himself somewhere. He thought of death, of revenge, of tremendous hazards and overwhelming sacrifices. He thought of all those things that seeth and boil in the heart of a rejected lover.

Then out of the black denseness of his thoughts there floated up the dim but piercing flicker of the offer he had been made. To his desolate soul it shone like a dull-red, turbid smudge of light and hope. . . It warmed and caressed and beckoned. It promised peace, revenge, forgetfulness and fortune. . . .

It made that answer for Levanter for which de Ribaud so very tactfully had refused to press.

CHAPTER FIVE

Five hundred miles from San Francisco, high over the vast expanse of the trackless Pacific Ocean, the airship Wilbur Wright was tearing through space. All of her six engines were running smoothly and sweetly, each turning out the power of two thousand horses, sending the huge airship forward at an average speed of one hundred and twenty miles an hour.

In the navigating cabin, built into the keel and streamlined to the forward end of the envelope, Captain Johnstone and his officers were engaged in "shooting the sun" for latitude. On the forward lookout post, atop the envelope 90 feet higher up, stood Howard Redmond, the second officer, sextant glued to his eye, engaged in the same task.

The passengers were spread about the ship, some taking their morning walk along the 1,000 foot promenade deck built on top of the envelope. Some were in the smoking-room playing cards, or getting up a pool on the day's run. Others were in the observation saloon, lying recumbent in comfortable lounging chairs.

Upon the after end of the promenade deck,

seated in long deck chairs were Commander Fitzgerald and Mary Ingleton. They had gone there immediately after breakfast, which was served two hours after the airship had left San Francisco. Mrs. Ingleton was still in her cabin below. For some time the naval officer and his companion sat watching for a glimpse of the placid ocean through the occasional rifts which split the rolling clouds below the airship. The clouds themselves presented a remarkable sight as the brilliant sun played upon their rounded billows and gave them the appearance of gigantic puffs of snow-white cotton. Beneath these fleecy billows a tropical rain-storm was in progress, but in the sea of air through which the Wilbur Wright was speeding all was calm and serene, with not a single speck of cloud above to mar the perfect contour of the sky-blue vaulted heavens.

Neither Fitzgerald nor his companion had spoken since they sat down. Mary was in raptures over the scene unfolded below her. Fitzgerald was plainly nervous. His unusually steady hands were shaking perceptibly, and he was constantly shifting uneasily in his chair. This became so noticeable at last that Mary turned to him and asked:

“Don’t you feel well, Commander?”

“Why do you ask that?” parried Fitzgerald.

Mary paused a moment and then replied:

“Well from your manner you don’t appear well. In fact you look quite worried.”

"I've just been thinking about something," answered Fitzgerald, "and trying to make up my mind what to do."

"Oh! do tell me," exclaimed Mary, "maybe I can help you."

Fitzgerald suddenly sat up in his chair with an eager look in his eyes. Mary's remark had brought more animation to his face than he had exhibited at any time since they had boarded the airship.

"You can help me, Miss Ingleton," he said eagerly; then after a moment's reflection, he continued in a more dejected tone, "but I don't know whether you would be willing to."

"How strange you are, Commander. What makes you think that I wouldn't help you if I could?"

"Well I know you could help me in this case, but it is something of such vital importance that I hesitate to ask you for fear you would refuse."

Mary looked up at him, and in a short quick glance her intuition divined the cause of Fitzgerald's agitation and his cryptic remarks. She quickly lowered her eyes as a warm blush suffused her cheeks. Then with true womanly instinct she promptly attempted to change the embarrassing subject by exclaiming:

"Oh! look Commander, there's a break in the clouds. You can see the ocean now. Isn't it wonderful?"

"Yes it is," replied Fitzgerald, "but to me it isn't nearly as wonderful as you are—Mary!"

He lingered longingly over her name, the first time he had used it in her presence. Again Mary blushed, and then in her confusion she said in whispering tones:

“Don’t, please don’t, or I will have to leave you.”

“You can’t,” exclaimed Fitzgerald, as he suddenly leaned over and grasped her hands. Then before she could make any move he continued in impassioned tones, “No! you can’t leave me until you have heard what is in my heart Mary. I love you Mary! I love you with all my soul. I have tried hard to tell you Mary, but I could never gather up sufficient courage. It is hard for me to tell you now. I am just a plain man. I am not gifted with speech, but even if I were there are no words in any language that could describe my feelings toward you, Mary. I have loved you since the first time I saw you, with a love that has grown from day to day. You are more than all the world to me. I want to be with you always. I watch for you every moment, Mary. I am unhappy and lonesome when you are not with me. Mary, won’t you be my wife?”

The unusual fervor that gripped Fitzgerald and spurred him to unwonted eloquence kept him keyed up while he waited anxiously and impatiently for Mary to reply. He devoured her with his eyes, as with downcast head, she nervously twisted her hands within her lap. Thus she sat for several minutes trying hard to find a way to deal with the new and unexpected situation. She

had never dreamed that Fitzgerald was in love with her. The excitement of the voyage, and the constant retrospection upon the incident with Levanter had kept her in a state of oblivion to the persons about her. In a way she had acted toward them as though they were necessary parts of her surroundings, and she had not given them a moment's thought, nor paid any attention to their whims or moods. Therefore the proposal of Fitzgerald came to her like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky. She was completely non-plussed by it and at a loss as to what to say.

She knew she did not love him. In fact so far as her feelings were concerned she had in an abstract way looked upon him as one commanding her filial respect. The thought as a possible lover had certainly never entered her head. As she mused, Fitzgerald's impatience gained mastery over him, and Mary was suddenly awakened from the reverie his proposal had plunged her into, by his exclamation:

"Mary dear, can't you say something."

"Really I don't know," she blurted out, "I don't know what to say. It would be silly to say it was so unexpected, but honestly you took me by surprise. I have never thought of you as a lover, Commander, really I haven't, so I cannot give you an answer unless it be, 'No.' "

"No, don't say that," pleaded Fitzgerald, "don't say that! I am willing to wait. I do love you, Mary, and nothing that ever happens can change the feeling. I am yours only and

always. I am willing to do anything you say dear, but can't you give me some little encouragement?"

Mary suddenly assumed an air of dignity that seemed strange in one so young.

"Listen Commander," she said, "haven't you wondered why I am making this trip at this time of the year? I will tell you."

She then told the story of her experience with Levanter, leaving out no detail of her own perturbation.

"So you see Commander," she continued, "I am not yet myself. I don't know just what to say to you. I want to say 'No,' but I like you very much. As matters stand now I can't give you any encouragement, it would not be right. Let us be friends, but please, please do not ask me again."

"Very well, Mary," said Fitzgerald, "I will wait gladly under those circumstances. Maybe you will change your liking into love. I will certainly do all I can to bring that about. I hope so with all my heart. I will obey your command, for this voyage anyway, but I am going to ask you again dear, when I think the time has arrived."

While this scene was being enacted unobserved upon the after end of the ship, another incident was occurring in another part of the ship. In the wireless cabin just abaft the navigating room, Herbert Alexander, the wireless operator, sat with his legs upon the instrument table, the

receivers fastened to his ears, and a novel in his hands. He read as he listened for stray calls and smoked with ease, at peace with all the world, dreaming between paragraphs of the Geisha girl in Yokohama waiting to entertain him at the end of the flight.

Presently, with a bored expression on his face, he dropped the book and leisurely withdrew his legs from the table. His sensitive ears had responded to the call, WWR. WWR. WWR., of his ship. The calling station signed San Francisco.

With a patience born of experience he waited until the operator at San Francisco finished, then grasping the sending key, he answered the call and gave the signal to go ahead. Taking one of the telegraph blanks he wrote down:

“Be on your guard. Air pirate again operating.” This was followed by a brief description of the attack on the Langley.

The news of the threatening danger spread like wildfire among the passengers. Their moods immediately changed. Upon their countenances appeared the shadows of deep thought, the furrows of deep anxiety and fear. All grew quiet and expectant.

In a corner of the salon, apart from the rest, stood Wing Commander Kenneth Fitzgerald, with Mrs. Ingleton and Mary. Mrs. Ingleton was very perturbed, but not so Mary. She was obviously pleased with the situation, for she

evinced a greater interest in it than she had shown for months.

“Just think,” she said joyously to Fitzgerald, “that we might get an honest to goodness adventure. Isn’t it thrilling? The girls in Washington will be terribly envious when they read about it. Oh! I do hope the old pirate shows up. I’ll be terribly disappointed if he doesn’t. Isn’t it terribly exciting?”

CHAPTER SIX

Throughout the night the Wilbur Wright had steadily forged ahead. The crew had willingly volunteered to two watches instead of three, consequently a more rigid lookout had been maintained at all points of the ship. The course lay a little more than ten degrees south of the Tropic of Cancer.

The night had been well illuminated with a starry heaven, such as one sees only in tropical regions, but to the anxious watchers it had been passing slowly. Now at six o'clock dawn was emerging with tropical swiftness, to replace the star punched blackness of the sky. The airship was rapidly approaching the southern end of the Hawaiian archipelago.

An hour afterward Captain Johnstone came into the navigating cabin. A few minutes later the towering crater of Mauna Loa, the volcanic mass of the Island of Hawaii, appeared on the northwestern horizon like a dim cloud specking the clear sky about them. It was fully three hundred miles away. Howard Redmond, the second officer, who was on watch at the time,

pointed it out to the commander in the usual terse manner of the navigator.

Captain Johnstone looked at it in an abstract manner, while in his mind he went over the events of the previous day. There to the northwest, a few hours flying distance, lay Honolulu. Not a single aircraft was in sight, although undoubtedly government ships were patrolling in the vicinity of the Hawaiian capital. He had already made his decision to continue flying on the more southerly course direct to Manila without stopping at Honolulu, but now the actual sight of Hawaii without any sign of the pirate had put the situation in an entirely new light.

There seemed to be no question that he could make Honolulu safely, particularly with government craft undoubtedly but a short distance away. Then too, if necessary, he could leave for Manila at a different time from that given in the schedule, and make arrangements to keep his departure secret.

After considering these points for some time Captain Johnstone suddenly made up his mind to depart from his original plan and go to Honolulu. Accordingly he gave orders to bring the airship about, and place her on the new course. After seeing these commands obeyed, he went into his cabin and rang for his breakfast.

Half an hour later the lookout man at the observation post on top of the envelope shouted down through the loud speaking telephone:

“There’s a ship three points off the port bow, Sir, very high.”

Redmond rushed over to the port window in the navigating cabin and searched the sky. Finally he made out a tiny speck at an almost unbelievable altitude. For a few seconds he watched it, and then decided that its general appearance and position were sufficiently suspicious to warrant action. He sent a boy to call Captain Johnstone from his room. The latter who had just finished his breakfast, hurried to the navigating room, where Redmond told him of the strange craft that had just been sighted.

Captain Johnstone picked up his glasses and pointed them to the distant object in the skies. He watched it as it swept along in apparent circuitious course at tremendous speed. At this time the Wilbur Wright was flying at an altitude of 15,000 feet. He next picked up a pair of altitude finders and trained them upon the stranger. After an observation lasting several seconds, he turned round to Redmund and said:

“My God; it’s fully 45,000 feet above the sea! It must be a very unusual craft to keep that altitude. It may be the pirate. Anyway I’m not going to take any chances with it. We’re pretty close to Honolulu now, and even if it is the pirate we ought to make the airport safely. Please send for Mr. Alexander.”

The captain then picked up his field glasses again and continued to watch the stranger

through them. Shortly afterwards the wireless operator appeared in response to the captain's call. At this very moment the captain observed the stranger in the skies turn around and then begin a wide spiral dive. All hesitation disappeared from his mind. Throwing down the glasses, he picked up a piece of paper and began to write:

“Captain Smith, Naval Commander Honolulu.

“Wilbur Wright in Latitude 15.20 N. Longitude 152.35 E. Strange craft approximate altitude 45,000 feet now spiralling toward us. Believe it to be pirate airplane. Please rush assistance. Johnstone.”

Turning to the waiting wireless operator, he thrust the message in his hand and said:

“Please get that off immediately, Mr. Alexander.”

Then he rang for the chief steward and at the same time ordered the bugler to sound the alarm. Even before the steward started for the navigating cabin, the thoroughly alarmed passengers began to troop into the dining room. As soon as the former had reported to Captain Johnstone he was told to have the stewards make a search of the passengers' quarters to see that all the passengers were in the dining room.

“When they are all in the dining salon,” continued the Captain, “tell them that we have sighted a suspicious craft, and that I thought it best they should remain in the salon until further orders. Tell them we are only 400 miles

from Honolulu, and that I have wirelessly for assistance, and that I do not think there is any danger.”

The steward left to go about his task. In the wireless room Alexander had just got into communication with Honolulu and had started to send the captain's message.

By this time the passengers were in the dining salon. They were talking to each other in excited tones in groups at the various tables, when the chief steward arrived and delivered the captain's message.

At the captain's table in the center of the salon sat Commander Fitzgerald with Mrs. Ingleton and her daughter. They had been in the dining room when the warning bugle was sounded. Mrs. Ingleton, being somewhat nervous, was almost terror stricken, and Fitzgerald was doing his best to allay her fears. Mary however, was alive with intense excitement. She could hardly restrain herself from clapping her hands over the prospect of the adventure. “Oh! isn't it thrilling!” she exclaimed.

Just then one of the passengers at a window on the port side shouted across the room:

“He's getting very close to us. He's coming very fast. Just look at him!”

The passengers who had remained seated started excitedly for the windows. Before they could reach them there was the sound of an explosion followed by a sizzling, ripping sound, and the ship shook from stem to stern.

CHAPTER SEVEN

An air of anxiety hung over the United States Naval Station at Pearl Harbor on the Island of Oahu, six miles west of Honolulu. In the office of the commandant sat Captain James H. Smith, an expression of deep concern spread over his weather beaten face. Seated with him and sharing his gloomy thoughts was Air Commander Heathcote, commander of the aerial forces using the Hawaiian archipelago as their basis.

Both had just been discussing the airship Wilbur Wright which was now several hours overdue. Not a single word had been received from her. The fate of the Langley, only a few hours previously, was freshly engraven on their memories. In fact the passengers were still aboard the tramp steamer Yang-Tsze, which was ploughing its lubberly way toward Manila. Now there loomed up the possibility that the Wilbur Wright had shared the same fate.

Both officers had dispatched every craft that was available under their command to search the seas and the air, in accordance with orders from Washington. All were in immediate wireless intercommunication with each other, but

none had sighted or heard from the overdue airship.

Thus they sat and discussed the possibilities of the situation while waiting impotently for information. Presently a messenger came in from the naval radio station with a penciled note from the operator. It stated that a distress signal had been received from the Wilbur Wright, but that the operator had been unable to receive it completely owing to interference from another station, that was working on the same wave length as the Wilbur Wright.

Captain Smith showed the note to Heathcote, and the two men immediately walked over to the wireless station. There the operator was frantically endeavoring to get into touch with the Wilbur Wright. Upon the entrance of the two commanders, the operator ceased his efforts long enough to advise them of what had occurred.

"I heard an S.O.S. call, Sir," he said, "and it was signed by the Wilbur Wright. The interference made it impossible to get the message, but I got parts of it. I have been trying to get the Wilbur Wright again, but now I don't receive any answer at all, and the other station has also stopped sending. I sent out a general call too, in the hope that the nearby craft might answer in case the Wilbur Wright didn't, but there's no reply. Here's what I managed to get through the interference."

The operator handed Captain Smith a slip

of paper on which was written parts of a message, just as they had been received by the operator, as follows:

“Captain Smith ** *** ** Honol * Wilbu
* Wright *** itude 15.2 ** 52.35 ** craft believe
***** pirate ***”

“That’s all I could get, Sir,” added the operator “and it’s just as it came in.”

Captain Smith and Commander Heathcote both pored over the fragmentary message intently for several seconds. Then the former said:

“It looks as though he were being attacked by the pirate and was trying to tell us. Those figures are undoubtedly his position.”

“Yes,” said Heathcote, that’s probably the case. The first of those figures is most likely to be his latitude, and the other his longitude. There must be a figure missing though. It’s probably 15.2 N. and 152.35 E. It wouldn’t be a bad idea to send out some patrol craft in that general direction. I’ll order my outfit to proceed there immediately. It may be that the station interfering was the pirate himself.”

Turning to the operator Commodore Heathcote asked whether any of the aircraft, or the naval vessels had received the call from the airship.

“I imagine they did, Sir,” replied the former, “but as soon as the call came in I told everybody to keep off while I took the message. They would probably listen in too, and take the message down, but I don’t think they got anything more than I did. I didn’t bother to ask them,

because I have been busy trying to raise the Wilbur Wright ever since. If you want me to I'll ask them now."

"You might as well," said the Commodore, "and then when you get the flagships I'll give you a message to send to the commanders."

The operator proceeded to send out a general call, and shortly afterwards received replies from the flagships of the naval unit and the aircraft squadron. He asked both of them whether they had received the message from the Wilbur Wright, and after a brief wireless communication learned they had received no more than he.

While the operator was calling the patrol craft, the two commanders had picked up a chart and pin-pointed the position given in the message.

"It's about four hundred miles from here," said Heathcote. We could probably get out there as soon as any of the ships on patrol duty. The big P. Q. flying boat is the fastest thing around here. It's practically ready to take off any minute. I'm going out in her, do you want to come along?"

"You bet," replied Captain Smith, glad to be active, and greatly relieved that some of the uncertainty had passed.

Heathcote turned over a message he had hurriedly written to the wireless operator and ordered him to send it immediately to the commander of the patrol aircraft. It advised the commander to proceed to the position given with

all possible speed, and make a careful search within a radius of one hundred miles, and also to listen carefully for any wireless messages from the Wilbur Wright.

The two officers then went out to the seaplane landing beach, and gave orders to the handling crew to get the P-Q flying boat ready. This was quickly obeyed, and ten minutes later the big aircraft had risen gracefully from the smooth waters of the harbor and was circling rapidly to an altitude of five thousand feet. As soon as this height was attained, the ship was straightened out and placed on a direct course to the position given in the message from the Wilbur Wright. Swiftly it passed over the mountainous archipelago, skirting the lofty peaks of the volcanoes.

Two hours later the look-out man in the forward gun nest shouted back through the intercommunicating telephone: "There are some small objects in the water, Sir. I can't make out what they are."

Commodore Heathcote took his glasses and looked down, and then ordered his pilot to make a landing near them. He also swept the skies in search of other aircraft. In the distance the war planes that had been on patrol duty were coming up at rapid speed. Heathcote ordered the wireless operator of the P-Q to tell them he was going to land and request them to circle around the vicinity until further orders.

The pilot of the P-Q, threw over the wheel control and pushed the rudder bar with his feet.

The big flying boat nosed over and down, then went into a swift spiral dive. In rapid corkscrew movements it swept down through the air five thousand feet in sixty seconds, and then straightened out fifty feet above the surface of the sea. Two seconds later it was skimming over the smooth surface less than a hundred feet from the nearest boat.

All doubt as to the nature of the objects in the water had now vanished. There were six lifeboats, and they were from the airship Wilbur Wright. As the flying boat taxied over towards them the passengers let loose a rousing cheer and waved a welcome to their rescuers. Through his glasses Commodore Heathcote made out the uniformed figure of Captain Johnstone in the leading lifeboat. He told his pilot to taxi over toward it. A few moments later the P-Q drew up alongside.

“What happened, Captain,?” shouted Commodore Heathcote.

“We were shot down by an airplane,” replied the airship commander, “we have a lady passenger in serious condition and in need of immediate hospital attention. It is Mrs. Ingleton, Secretary of the Navy’s wife. Have you got any machine that would take her to Honolulu quickly? She is in a critical condition. As soon as you take her off I’ll come over and tell you what happened.”

CHAPTER EIGHT

One of the patrol airplanes, in response to an order from Commodore Heathcote, came down and landed near the lifeboats, and transferred Mrs. Ingleton from the captain's boat. It then took off and started for Honolulu at high speed.

As soon as this operation had been completed, Captain Johnstone was taken off his lifeboat, aboard the P-Q, flying boat, where he was received in the after gun-pit by the two government commanders. "I have wirelessly for a couple of destroyers to come along here and pick up the passengers and crew, Captain," said Captain Smith. "It will take them a few hours to get here, and we will stand by you till they arrive. Tell us how it happened."

Captain Johnstone narrated the story of the second act of aerial piracy that was destined within a few hours to shock the world into frenzied action.

"We had been fully warned about the Langley," he began, "so I put the ship a hundred miles off her course. At first I decided to fly to Manila without a stop, but when we fetched up with Hawaii without any sign of the pirate

I changed my mind and decided to make Honolulu.

"I'd scarcely changed my course when the lookout man observed a strange craft at tremendous altitude. After an observation I figured it must have been at least 45,000 feet up, and it was moving rapidly in circles. Suddenly it commenced to spiral down toward us, and I decided it was no time to take chances, and I ordered my wireless operator to send out an S.O.S.

"The stranger came down on us with terrific speed. He didn't make a sound, with the exception of the hum of his propeller. He soon reached our level and circled around us. Then he fired a shot straight at us. It went clean through the middle of the envelope. I gave orders to nose down and land, but it was useless. The pirate was doing some great shooting, and he soon had us disabled.

"We settled quickly and he came down after us. As soon as we had landed I had the boats out, and started putting the women in them. When we had done this he came up alongside. A man leaned out of the window in the body and shouted through a megaphone.

"'You've got a Miss Mary Ingleton of Washington on board. Where is she?'"

"As soon as he had asked this question another man stood up in a small cockpit in the bows and fingered the trigger of a machine gun fixed there. He looked as though he meant business. I hesitated a few moments and tried to evade his question, but he shouted back:

“‘I know she’s on board. Tell her to come right here, I want to speak to her. I’m not going to stand any nonsense. If she’s not here in five minutes, you will be placing all your passengers in danger. It’s up to you.’

“Miss Ingleton was in my boat with her mother and Commodore Fitzgerald, and she heard what the stranger had said. Mrs. Ingleton immediately became hysterical and pleaded with me not to let her daughter go. Fitzgerald was also against it, as he was quite sure the pirate would not have the heart to endanger defenseless people. ‘All we’ve got to do is to stand firm against him, and he’ll weaken,’ he told me.

“‘I was in a terrible dilemma. Naturally I didn’t want to let Miss Ingleton go over to the pirate, and I didn’t want to jeopardize the rest of the passengers. We could only see the two men on the strange airplane. They wore heavy flying clothes and had chamois masks over their faces. I imagine that was for the high altitudes they were flying, as well as for the purpose of disguise. While I was trying to figure a way out, Miss Ingleton got up and said:

“‘Let’s row over there, Captain. It won’t do any harm to talk to him and find out what he wants.’

“‘I gave the order and my crew pulled away until we came within a few feet of the airplane. As we drew up the fellow in the cabin leaned out and asked:

“‘Have you got Miss Ingleton on board that boat. Where is she?’

“Before I could answer Miss Ingleton stood up and said:

“‘Here I am, what do you want?’

“‘We want you to come on board here,’ he replied, ‘If you do so we will let the rest of the passengers alone. If you don’t come willingly we’ll be compelled to use force.’

“To this Miss Ingleton answered: ‘I’ve got my mother with me, can she come too?’

“‘No, we only want you,’ the fellow replied.

“Mrs. Ingleton began to cry hysterically. ‘Don’t go Mary, don’t go, I’m afraid.’ Her daughter spoke to her soothingly a few minutes and tried to console her. Miss Ingleton was not in the least afraid and was acting very calmly. I overheard her say to her mother: ‘I can take care of myself, mother dear, don’t worry, you don’t want to make all these other poor people suffer, do you. We can’t stop this man from doing what he wants. If I don’t go willingly he can get me by force. I don’t know what he wants, but he will probably let me come right back again.’

“After a little more pleading Miss Ingleton stood up again and shouted over to the man in the airplane: ‘Alright, I’ll come over now.’

“I went to her, and said: ‘It’s funny that he should know that you were on board. Do you recognize his voice.’ She said that as far as she knew it was the first time she had heard it. It was quite strange to her and she did not recognize it at all. I was trying to get a clue to the man’s identity by asking her that ques-

tion, but she couldn't help me.

"When we came up alongside, the fellow stood in the doorway of the cabin and assisted Miss Ingleton on board. While he was doing this the other man in the gun cockpit stood over us with a revolver in his hand. As soon as Miss Ingleton was on board the airplane the fellow in the doorway ordered us to shove off and lay clear. I tried to look into the small doorway while we were alongside, but he stood so full in the small aperture that it was impossible to see anything.

"As soon as we fell away the cabin door was closed, and the airplane started over to where the Wilbur Wright was lying awash in the water. He evidently had a marine screw for use on the water, as his propellers were not working. I saw some of the crew go aboard the disabled airship. There seemed to be five of them. Whether any remained I don't know. They were there for upwards of twenty minutes, and during that time one of them was engaged in passing most of the valuable cargo from the airship to the airplane. Then they all got aboard the airplane again and taxied away about a hundred yards. From that position they opened fire on the Wilbur Wright and continued firing until she sank.

"Suddenly the propellers of the airplane began to whirl around, and in a few seconds she was in the air. She climbed with incredible speed and disappeared in no time. We could not hear any motor sound at all, and there was

apparently no room for the motors where the propellers were housed. The propellers must have been connected to the motors by means of gears.

“As soon as the airplane disappeared Mrs. Ingleton collapsed completely. She had been buoyed up by the hope that her daughter would come back, but now that the pirate had left without hesitation she was heartbroken. We tried our best to console and revive her, but it was of no avail.

“After the pirate had disappeared I made the rounds of the boats to find whether all my passengers and crew were safe. In the hurry we had not had time to make a roll call. The round showed all the passengers were safely on board with the exception of Miss Ingleton. All the crew were also on board, except the second officer Howard Redmond, who is missing. I made inquiries, but no one seems to have seen him anywhere on the ship. I am afraid he is lost. I can't account for his disappearance. He must have got tangled up somewhere in the ship and gone down with her.”

CHAPTER NINE

The sinking of the airship Wilbur Wright by the unknown aerial pirate, coming as it did twenty four hours after the airship Langley had been shot down, shocked the entire world, and caused a wave of anxiety to surge through every civilized country. "Where will he strike next?" was the thought on every mind.

Its immediate effect was the wholesale cancellation of all commercial air transport schedules along the Pacific railways, completely isolating Australia and the Orient from rapid communication with the rest of the world.

This was followed by a universal demand that the pirate be tracked down and brought to justice. Throughout the North American continent there was an insistent demand by every newspaper for immediate action in running down the menace.

The question was immediately brought up before the executive committee of the League of Nations, but at the request of the American member it was decided to allow the United States Government to patrol the airways and apprehend the pirate, particularly as only American ships had been attacked thus far.

The news of the Wilbur Wright attack brought the utmost consternation to official Washington. To the Secretary of the Navy it brought the added fear for his daughter's safety and anxiety over the seriousness of his wife's condition. With his daughter actually in the power of the unknown pirate, he was fearful lest harm should come to her when the forces of the government bore down upon the outlaw.

This fear weighed so heavily upon him that he gave expression to it at the cabinet meeting which was called at once by the President to plan the campaign against the pirate. As soon as the meeting was called to order Secretary Ingleton arose and addressing the President, gave voice to his fears and concluded by saying: "Therefore Mr. President I desire to be excused from taking any part in formulating the plans that will be devised to run down this man, because I feel my judgement might be influenced by fears for my daughter's safety. I will, however, pledge myself to carry out as far as possible, wherever my department is concerned, any plans that my colleagues may decide upon."

The President and the other members of the cabinet expressed their sympathy with the Secretary of the Navy and assured him that in the plans laid down every possible precaution would be taken to insure the safety of his daughter.

Then George Cowl, Secretary of Air, arose and read an official cipher cablegram he had received from Commodore Heathcote describing the attack on the Wilbur Wright in detail.

“You will see,” he said, after reading the cablegram, “that its details coincide exactly with those of the attack on the Langley. The methods adopted in both cases are practically identical, except of course for the abduction of Miss Ingleton. In fact to me there seems to be no possibility of any doubt as to the pirate being the same in both cases. The chances of there being two pirates operating in that vicinity are extremely remote.

“In laying our plans to hunt him down there is one important point to bear in mind. He cannot operate without a base. He must have a base to replenish his fuel, food and execute whatever repairs are necessary to his machine after each flight.

“It seems to me that our first task is to locate this base. It must be on one of the Islands in the mid-Pacific groups. Another problem which we must solve is this: What is his method of keeping his base supplied with the necessary stores?

“These are two very important points, and I think it would be wise to investigate whether any coast vessels have been carrying cargoes necessary to airplane maintenance, and whether they have been destined to unusual places. It would also be a good plan to make inquiries at all aircraft factories to ascertain whether they had by any chance constructed the machine used by the pirate. Even from the meagre description we have of the machine one gathers that its design is quite out of the ordinary, and should

be easy to trace if it was constructed by any ordinary manufacturer.

“The next thing in my opinion would be to issue explicit instructions to all the naval radio operators in the Pacific. The incident yesterday when the pirate shot down the Wilbur Wright and then inquired for Miss Ingleton shows that he must be equipped with wireless, because there is no other way in which he could have known she was on board.

“The fact that he has wireless on board and uses it is borne out by what occurred when the Wilbur Wright sent out an S.O.S. call. The operator at Pearl Harbor was unable to get the complete message because of interference, which, judging from all the facts in the case, could have come from no one else except the pirate.

“Under these circumstances I would suggest that a description of his signals be obtained from the Pearl Harbor station operator and sent out by rush cable to all the other operators with instructions to listen for them at all times.

“Then I would also suggest that the operators at Pearl Harbor, Guam and Manila be instructed to adjust their Direction Finder apparatus on the pirate immediately they hear him, and get a bearing on him. In this way we might possibly be able to trace him to the base. We could also arrange a new code for the operators to use in transmitting the results of their Direction Finding bearings. This code should also be rushed to them by cable, with the request that they

repeat it back to us, so that there will be no chance of any error.

“So much for that phase. We must now lay plans for tracking him down with patrols. In my opinion we must proceed with this on well organized lines, and should use both naval and aircraft units. The latter should be fast scouts with long cruising range. Dirigibles are too slow for this work, I think, and too vulnerable against this man. We must arrange a complete co-ordination between the wireless and the patrol units, and the latter should be advised of all codes.

“In this connection I have just received an interesting cable from Commander Fitzgerald who was a passenger on the Wilbur Wright. Here it is. He says:

“‘Respectfully request that I be given opportunity of leading any expedition against airplane which shot down airships. As Miss Ingleton was under my escort I feel it a personal duty to see no harm comes to her and that she be safely restored to her parents. I am anxious to go after the pirate, and strongly urge my request be granted.’

“Now Fitzgerald had ample opportunity of getting a comprehensive idea of the attacking airplane, and he observed it both on the water and in the air. Therefore he is the logical man for the job. Moreover, he undoubtedly feels he has been remiss in the pledge to look after Mrs. Ingleton and her daughter and seeks to atone, although personally I do not think there is any-

thing else he could have done under the circumstances. I propose putting him in command of the pursuit forces and having Commodore Heathcote at Honolulu in charge of base operations. I think that Honolulu would be the best place to base the expedition because of its central location to the apparent field of the pirate's operations.

“I think that we should have at least twelve squadrons of pursuit airplanes for the task, and while they should be based on Honolulu for repairs and refitting, I am in favor of having each squadron located at some particular island so that it can be concentrated rapidly at any particular spot the pirate is reported in.

“The task of running down the pirate should be carried out by a double arrangement, first a daily patrol and second a special concentrated patrol. In the first case I would suggest that the squadrons be located on islands approximately five hundred miles apart and that each squadron be assigned to patrol a definite territory of approximately five hundred miles square. This could be done each day with four airplanes, leaving each squadron with fourteen machines in reserve for emergency.

“The patrolling airplanes would keep in constant wireless communication with their squadron headquarters, and all the squadron headquarters should be linked together by wireless or cable. The airplanes held in reserve by each squadron will be kept in readiness at all times, and in the event of a patrol airplane sighting the

pirate, the reserve machines will concentrate on the spot as soon as possible, after receiving the wireless report. It would also be well to determine the types of naval vessels to use, and the manner in which they can co-operate with the aircraft.

“Those are my views gentlemen, but I am willing and anxious to co-operate in any other plan that you may adopt.”

As Secretary Cowl finished, and even before he could sit down, a murmur of approval swept through the room, and one or two of the cabinet members actually clapped their hands in applauding the general plan outlined by the head of the Air Department. For a few seconds there was a spirited discussion as the members went over the points of Cowl's suggestions. Then John F. Seeley, the Secretary of War, arose and said:

“The Secretary of Air has stated the case concisely and admirably. I agree absolutely with all his main points and heartily concur in the methods he had so masterly proposed to meet the menacing situation. There is, however, one phase of the situation that he only touched upon—the use of naval craft in the pursuit.

“Under normal circumstances we would await the pronouncement of our colleague of the Navy Department upon that subject, but in view of his statement at the outset of this meeting I am presuming to venture a suggestion in his place.

“Before I do so, however, I want to state that there may be a very grave question as to

the efficacy of a surface patrol in this situation, and I would very urgently suggest that before anything definite is done that we consult with the experts of the Navy Department as to the utility and feasibility of using naval vessels.

“Should they decide that it would be feasible to use them, it seems to me that since we are dealing solely with an aviation problem there are only two classes of naval craft that can be at all considered in this question—namely, destroyers and fast, light scout cruisers. Even these are inadequate so far as speed is concerned, but we might find them useful in long range, continuous patrol work.

“In using naval craft we must determine the amount of territory that we are going to patrol. Having definitely done this, we can then decide the exact number of vessels we shall require under the plan that I am going to propose to you.

“From the vantage point of a destroyer’s decks or lookouts the skies can be swept for a radius of approximately thirty miles. Therefore my plan is this:—place flotillas of destroyers or squadrons of scout cruisers on the ocean, each vessel to take a station sixty miles from its neighbor in any direction. These vessels are to do patrol duty at a predetermined speed along definite courses arranged so that the patrol is constantly maintained over the same stretches of water. At no time during the patrol must the sending apparatus of the wireless be used by any vessel, but the operator on each ship must maintain a constant watch at

his receiver.

“All these vessels should be equipped with a low powered wireless sending apparatus. I believe such sets are available, and the radio engineer should be instructed to adjust them so that they have a range no greater than sixty-five miles.

“If at any time it is necessary for the patrol craft to intercommunicate they would use these sets for the purpose. In cases of emergency they could use their regular sending apparatus.

“In the event of the pirate being observed the word will be passed along the lines by the wireless sets. In this connection I would suggest a simple code to express that fact, which could be followed by the figures of the position. For instance the letter O could be used to express the meaning ‘pirate observed’. Suppose he were seen in Longitude 178 E. and Latitude 12 N.; the signal sent along the lines would be ‘O 178 12’.

“Immediately upon receipt of such a signal the vessels of the flotilla would proceed to the general vicinity of that position at full speed and render such assistance with their anti-aircraft guns as would be possible under the circumstances.

“That is the general plan I have to suggest, gentlemen. If it is feasible the next question to be determined will be the extent of the territory we must cover by this means.”

A large map of the Pacific Ocean was spread across the table before the members of the cabinet, and they had all studied it during the dis-

cussion. At this stage the President said:

“Well, gentlemen, if it is found feasible by the naval experts to use naval vessels in this work, don’t you think that it would be advisable, in order to save valuable time, to authorize the Secretary of the Navy to go ahead along the lines of the plan that Mr. Seely has outlined, or along similar lines that may be suggested by the naval staff. I also think that Mr. Cowl should be authorized to proceed under the admirable plan that he has put forward for the forces controlled by his department.

“Before we go any further, however, I would like to state, in connection with Mr. Seeley’s suggestion, that I have been studying the map of the Pacific ocean. Of course I am not an expert, but at a glance, it seemed to me that if naval vessels were used at all, it would be a very good scheme to use them in a belt between the Hawaiian archipelago and the Marshall Island group to the eastward. How much territory would that involve Mr. Ingleton?”

“Why, roughly speaking, Mr. President,” replied the secretary of the navy after a quick calculation, “it would mean a belt of about two thousand miles in length, and I presume three hundred miles in width. This would not be impossible. In 1919, within our own memory, the Navy Department spread out a network of destroyers across the Atlantic Ocean over a distance as long, although not so wide, in connection with the first flight across that ocean with the historic old NC seaplanes that are now in

the Smithsonian Institute. So far as the physical aspects are concerned, such a patrol would not be impossible."

"That's what I thought," said the president, "There is another thing that suggests itself to me, and it is this: Why not take advantage of the location of the mid-Pacific islands as lookout positions, place observers on each of them, and make them part of the general observation system, with instructions to the observers to report immediately to Honolulu if they should happen to sight the pirate.

"Well, gentlemen, I propose that the different departments be empowered to put the suggestions made here to practical use. The details of each scheme can be worked out by the experts and then be put into operation."

Before any reply could be made to this suggestion, Secretary Ingleton broke in and said:

"Mr. President, the fears that beset me constantly arise in my mind, and I cannot overcome them. I feel that in the circumstances I am in no condition to actively prosecute the affairs of my department, particularly as the most pressing problem of the department is in connection with the cause of my own troubles. Therefore I desire to tender my resignation right now, and transfer my department to abler hands. I will send you, Mr. President, the formal notice of my resignation as soon as this meeting is concluded, and I implore you to accept it in the interests of the country. I am going to the Orient to cheer my wife and aid in the search of my daughter."

CHAPTER TEN

For two months after the attack on the Wilbur Wright the airways of the Pacific Ocean remained free from the activities of the unknown and mysterious flying pirate. The aerial transport companies slowly and cautiously resumed their schedules as the government patrol system steadily increased in efficiency and scope.

Although the pirate had apparently suspended his operations, the government had gone ahead with the organized plan developed at Washington for dealing with the menace caused by his advent. By the end of two months squadron after squadron of fighting airplanes had been dispatched to the Pacific, and had taken up the duty of patrolling the airways.

Under the plan of stationing a squadron at every available island as nearly as possible within five hundred miles of each other, squadrons had already been distributed and established as follows:

Squadron No. 1, at Johnston Island, Hawaiian Archipelago.

Squadron No. 2, at Wake Island.

Squadron No. 3, at Jaluit Island, Marshall group.

Squadron No. 4, at Ponape Island, Eastern Carolines.

Squadron No. 5, at Truk Island, Middle Carolines.

Squadron No. 6, at Yap Island, Pelew group.

Squadron No. 7 at Guam.

Squadron No. 8 at Asuncion, Marianas.

In addition to these, six reserve squadrons had their base at Honolulu and were operating temporarily from the islands of Midway, Laysan, Necker, Kauai, Oahu and Hawaii. All of the first eight squadrons were now definitely engaged in patrolling the airways east of Honolulu. To the westward the reserve squadrons and other squadrons on the Pacific coast of the United States were doing similar work. Wing Commander Fitzgerald in charge of pursuit operations had taken up headquarters with squadron No. 2 on Wake Island as the most centrally located.

The squadrons on the islands had each twelve airplanes in reserve at all times. Their headquarters had been linked together with special cable arrangements wherever facilities permitted. Where cables did not exist special wireless stations had been installed, and the code system had been definitely agreed upon.

The big naval wireless stations at Honolulu, Guam and Manila had been designated to control all operations within their respective zones, and the Honolulu station was in supreme charge of the entire situation so far as wireless was concerned. Each of the three big stations was

equipped with the latest type of Direction Finder apparatus.

Thus slowly, methodically and persistently the government laid the trap which it hoped would ensnare the man who had caused the havoc that threatened to entirely disrupt all aerial transportation. As yet, however, the quarry had refused to snap at the bait and in fact had apparently vanished completely so far as information revealed. The routine of the organized plan, however, was continued daily, with an occasional alarm to test the efficiency of the system.

Commodore Heathcote at Honolulu, who was in control of all base operations, had taken a keen interest in all the plans for the pursuit of the pirate and had personally tested all the arrangements. More particularly was he interested in the wireless arrangements for co-operating with the aerial fleets.

As soon as he was appointed, he made it a point of going to the naval radio station at Honolulu and familiarizing himself with the methods employed by the operators in picking up the signals of the pirate and getting his location in the event the latter should use his wireless apparatus. He listened attentively as the chief operator explained to him the working of the Direction Finder.

“The theory of its operation is very simple, Sir,” said the latter, “although some complicated calculations enter into the working out of a position due to certain variations that have to be determined and allowed for.”

“You see this loop of wire around this frame,” continued the operator pointing to a large square wooden frame, around the edge of which a wire was wound several times in parallel loops, with the two ends of the wire attached to another piece of apparatus. “Well it was found several years ago that such a ‘loop’ produced peculiar results when placed in the path of a train of electro-magnetic waves. It was found that if the edge of the loop was pointed toward the direction from which the waves were coming, signals would be recorded on the apparatus connected with it. In other words a small current was induced in the coil which was then registered by the delicate detectors and recording instruments.

“Now if the coil is turned so that its edge is at right angles to the path of the waves there is absolutely no current induced in it. In fact the moment the edge of the coil is turned away, either to the right or the left, from the true direction of the wireless waves, the signals immediately decrease in strength, and this decrease is more pronounced the more the coil is turned toward the right angle position. As a matter of fact the amount of current picked up by the loop is so small that we have to employ apparatus that amplifies or increases the effect produced by the current, consequently signals picked up from long distance are only recieved when the edge of the coil is pointing directly towards them.

“As you see, we use a compass with the Di-

rection Finder. With that we are able to get the bearing of the coil in degrees as soon as the adjustment for the strongest signals has been completed. That bearing of course tells us in what direction the station sending out the messages is located. Of course there have to be allowances made for magnetic deviation and certain other factors, but they are all charted and comparatively easy to apply."

"That's very interesting," said Commodore Heathcote, "very interesting, but as I understand it that only gives you the direction of the sending station. How do you find his exact location?"

"Well, we do that with the aid of two known wireless stations and triangulation," replied the operator. "It's done this way. Take for instance the station at Guam and this station. Suppose there is a ship at sea between us that is sending out signals, and we wish to determine its exact location. First of all I get a bearing on the ship with my Direction Finder, and of course Guam is doing the same thing with its apparatus at the same time. Now we know the exact latitude and longitude of both Guam and this station. As soon as I get the bearing I take a chart and then work out the angle of the bearing to our meridian of longitude and continue the resulting line of that angle across the chart.

"Guam then tells me what bearing he has obtained on the ship. I repeat the operation by obtaining the angle of Guam's bearing to his

meridian, and also continue the line across the chart. Somewhere on the chart the two lines will cross each other, and the point where they cross is the exact location of the ship that is sending out the wireless signals. If the ship is moving we repeat the process in a couple of hours, and that gives us an exact line on the course the ship is following. That's how it is done, Sir."

"By George!", exclaimed Heathcote, "that's wonderful. Now I'm sorry I didn't pay more attention to wireless. Why, there are marvelous possibilities in that. The more I think of it the more it appears to be the only way in which we shall be able to track this fellow down. God help him if ever he opens his wireless mouth."

"If he does, Sir, we'll get him sure," said the operator with the earnestness of conviction.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Day after day had passed in continuous patrol by the aircraft units without event. The concentrated destroyer and cruiser patrol discussed by the President and his cabinet in Washington had not been established, as the experts of the naval staff had considered it would be ineffectual in the circumstances. By this time practically all the aircraft of the aerial patrol developed in detail at the conference in Washington had been placed at their respective posts over the Pacific Ocean, and the whole plan was functioning well. The airway had remained clear so far as anything of piratical intent was concerned, and the aerial transit lines were very close to normal again.

So the daily round of routine passed until one morning, about ten weeks after the pirate had made his conspicuous advent, the operator at the Honolulu naval wireless station was suddenly moved into intensive concentration by strange signals in the receivers about his ears. Although they were continuous wave signals and lacked the individuality of the old type spark signals, there was nevertheless a very familiar aspect about the sending itself that caused the opera-

tor to pay the closest attention to the signals.

Switching hurriedly to the Direction Finder apparatus he began to work feverishly with the searching coil, moving it around slowly within the radius of a narrow arc as he adjusted the delicate receiving instruments connected with it. While he worked with excited but skillful haste, he turned around to his assistant and exclaimed:

“I’ve got the pirate. Get Manila and Guam on the cable quick. Tell them to get a bearing on him. He’s using a five thousand meter wave. Rush it before he stops sending.”

The assistant jumped to the table where the cable apparatus was located and in a few seconds had flashed the news across the Pacific that set the operators at the other two control stations busy.

“Gee!”, yelled the chief operator in delight after a few more seconds intensive work, “I’ve got my bearing on him. If the other fellows hurry up they can get one too before he stops. Get Mr. Heathcote on the ’phone. Tell him we’ve got the pirate, and that we’ve got a bearing on him. My bearing reads W by S 78. Rush it quick now. This looks like the best chance we may get.”

In response to the telephone message Commodore Heathcote came rushing over to the wireless station personally.

“Have you heard from Manila or Guam yet?” he inquired.

“Not yet, Sir,” replied the operator.

“Is the pirate still sending?”

“No Sir, he stopped just before you came in.”

At this moment the cable instruments began to work, and the assistant operator read out aloud each word from off the tape as it came in:

“Guam — got — bearing — on — pirate — just — before — he stopped — sending — but not — finally — adjusted — for maximum — signals — bearing — as — obtained — is — E by S 82.”

“Fine,” said Commodore Heathcote, you say yours was W by S 78. Alright, give me that chart.”

Quickly and steadily the air officer worked out the triangulation of the bearing on the chart, first obtaining the bearing line on the Honolulu reading, then one from the Guam bearing. When this was completed he continued the resulting lines across the chart until they crossed one another.

“That puts him roughly in latitude 16.50 N. and longitude 179 W.” he mused to himself, “Let’s see now, that’s about 700 miles from Wake Island, and—er—about 500 miles from Johnston Island.”

Turning to the operator he said: “Get Commander Fitzgerald on the cable at Wake Island quickly. Tell him we have heard the pirate sending by wireless from Latitude 16.50 N. and Longitude 179 W. Tell him to rush to that position at full speed with every available machine in his squadron. Tell him that we will advise him by wireless code of any change in the pirate’s position we may get. If he doesn’t hear from us

again, tell him to make a general search of that vicinity as soon as he arrives there. By the way you haven't heard from Manila, have you?"

"No, Sir."

"Alright, get Wake Island first, then when you have sent the message call up Manila and ask him if he got a bearing. If he did we may be able to work out a more definite position."

The assistant operator at the cable complied with the Commodore's request, and in a few moments got an acknowledgment of the receipt of the message from Wake Island. Then he called up Manila. After a short conversation with the operator at the latter station, he told the Commodore that Manila had not been able to get his instruments adjusted properly before the pirate stopped sending.

"Alright, never mind, we'll do the best we can with this," said Commodore Heathcote, "Let's see now, there's no cable at Johnston Island is there? Well, I don't know whether it would be advisable to notify the squadron there by wireless or not. The position that we would have to give with the message would tip the pirate off that we were on his trail. Wait a little while till we hear from Fitzgerald, and then I'll tell you what to do. In any case it will not take the machines at Johnston Island so long to get to the position as it will Fitzgerald's squadron."

About five minutes later a cable reply was received from Commodore Fitzgerald at Wake Island. It said that fourteen airplanes of the squadron stationed on the island were ready to

take off and would start out immediately to the position given.

“That’s fine,” said Heathcote, “it will take them about three and a half hours to get there. Fitzgerald will undoubtedly use his judgment in spreading his forces so as to cover as wide an area as possible. Keep our ears open for the pirate, and if he sends again get a bearing on him if possible so that we can get an idea of the course he is following. Tell Manila and Guam the same thing over the cable. Don’t use your wireless at all. I’ll be back again soon and let you know when to advise the Johnston Island squadron. If you get another position let me know immediately.”

“Alright sir,” replied the operator.

Before Commodore Heathcote got to the door, the operator at the cable instruments called to him to wait a moment as a message was coming. A few seconds later, he said:

“It’s from Wake Island, sir, he says that Commander Fitzgerald with fourteen airplanes has just left in pursuit of the pirate.”

CHAPTER TWELVE

For two hours after Commander Fitzgerald and his squadron left Wake Island a wireless silence reigned over the Pacific Ocean. Throughout that period the operators at the naval wireless stations of Honolulu, Guam and Manila sat with the telephone receivers glued to their ears listening with concentrated attention for the slightest sound from the pirate.

In the meantime the squadron of pursuit airplanes was speeding over the vast reaches of the ocean at slightly better than two hundred miles an hour toward the position given in the cable message from Honolulu. They were now within a flying distance of one hour and a half from that spot. The question revolving in the mind of Commander Fitzgerald as he sped along was the probability of the pirate rushing along from the position given at a speed equal to, or even greater than their own. The next two hours would determine that all important point.

Suddenly in all three of the great naval wireless stations the signals from the pirate's airplane were heard again simultaneously. Clearly and distinctly they came across the intervening space. Apparently the operator on board was

merely trying out his apparatus because he was not sending out any intelligible message. Nevertheless the operators at the naval stations took full advantage of the situation and trained their Direction Finders on him. A few moments work and all three obtained bearings before the pirate operator ceased sending.

“ ‘Phone Commodore Heathcote quick,” yelled the chief operator at the Honolulu station to his assistant. This done he continued, “Now get Guam and Manila and ask them if they got bearings.”

Before the cable queries were sent and answered Commodore Heathcote entered the station.

“What do you make it this time?” he inquired breathlessly,

“Why, Sir, it’s very strange,” said the operator, “but my reading is exactly the same as last time. I’m waiting to see what Guam and Honolulu say so that I can check up with them.”

“Here’s the Guam report now,” broke in the assistant operator from the cable table. It says ‘my bearing is the same as last time. I made two adjustments but obtained the same results each time.’”

“Alright,” said Heathcote, “Now call up Manila and see if by any chance he has succeeded in getting a reading. He was forewarned this time, and may have got a bearing. If he has it will act as a complete check on the position.”

After a few seconds’ work, the operator at the cable instruments got up and said: “Yes sir, he obtained a bearing, and he reports that it is E

by N 87.”

“That’s good, let’s see what it shows,” replied Heathcote as he picked up a chart and commenced to work upon it.

“By George!” he continued a few moments later, that absolutely confirms your first observation and puts the position at 16.50 N, 179 W. The only explanation I can give for it is that the pirate has been flying in circles around that general vicinity, probably for the purpose of picking up and attacking some commercial airship. If he only keeps there, Fitzgerald will get to him within the next hour. We couldn’t have wished for anything better.”

“Shall I advise Commander Fitzgerald by wireless, sir?” asked the operator.

“No” replied Heathcote, “keep quiet. Fitzgerald is going to that position as fast as he can get there. He will continue on his course I’m sure, even though he does not hear from us, and it will bring him there shortly. If you send any signals now it will tip the pirate off. Fitzgerald will be able to tackle him with his squadron, and won’t need any assistance. This looks like a great chance to get this fellow. I don’t think it would be wise to send the Johnston Island squadron after him. No, the best thing we can do now is to keep quiet. Tell Guam and Manila the same thing. Tell them under no circumstances to use their wireless again without instructions from us.”

For the next hour Heathcote remained in the wireless station. Both he and the chief operator

were in a state of suppressed excitement. The latter listened intently for the slightest sound. In their minds both conjured up a picture of the dramatic scene that they were certain was about to be enacted close to the central meridian of the eastern world, a scene they felt sure would cause a thrill to surge throughout civilization. The minutes ticked slowly by until more than an hour passed since the second reading had been obtained. Then across the ether came this signal from Fitzgerald's airplane:

“PCG.”

That was all. Heathcote, keenly alert, had noticed the almost imperceptible movement of the operator as the signal commenced and leaned over his shoulder as the latter wrote down the three letter signal.

“Good,” exclaimed the commodore, “that means he has sighted the pirate. Now things will begin to happen in a few minutes. Everything depends upon the speed and manœuvrability of the pirate machine. If it is no better than our own machines we'll get him sure.”

Patiently the three men in the wireless station waited for what seemed an eternity. Then suddenly there came this signal:

“AE.”

“That means he has engaged the pirate,” said Heathcote, “and has opened fire. Keep your ears open now for everything that comes along. There's nothing more we can do but wait.”

And wait they did. For thirty long minutes not a sound came from the spot in the vast

Pacific where was being fought the momentous battle in the skies that was to determine the immediate future of commercial transport. At the end of that period Heathcote could no longer restrain his impatience. He said to the operator:

“Send out a call to Fitzgerald and ask him what has happened if you can get him.”

The operator obeyed. For several minutes he called repeatedly, but could get no reply. Suddenly at the end of ten minutes he began to adjust his receiving apparatus very carefully with his right hand, while with his left hand he pressed the telephone receiver tightly into his ear. He continued this for several minutes and then with a sigh of disappointment relaxed.

“What’s the trouble,” asked Commodore Heathcote.

“I couldn’t raise Commander Fitzgerald’s ship,” replied the operator, “but I heard very faint signals that sounded like the sending of the pirate operator. I thought perhaps he was using a small powered set. I tried to amplify the signals, but it was no use. He was sending something but I couldn’t make out what it was.”

“That’s strange,” said the air officer, “I wonder what’s happened. In any case if that was the pirate it means that he is still flying, otherwise he wouldn’t be sending by wireless. I wonder why Fitzgerald doesn’t reply.”

“Oh, here he is now, sir,” said the operator, “he’s sending something. Wait now.”

Picking up a pencil the operator began to write the following:

“Why do you impose such a condition. Why don’t you act like a man. You ought to take a fair chance or none at all.”

“Is that what he said?” asked Heathcote, and receiving an answer in the affirmative continued, “I wonder what he means? That certainly sounds funny.”

The operator listened in for several minutes but no further messages were sent. He had just made up his mind to call up Fitzgerald when signals began coming in. Turning to Commodore Heathcote the operator exclaimed.

“Here’s Commander Fitzgerald calling us now, Sir.”

The operator answered the call, and then began to write:

“Heathcote Honolulu: We sighted the pirate flying in circles at approximate altitude of twenty-five thousand. At that time we were in wide-spread formation at fifteen thousand. I gave order to ascend to twenty-five thousand. The pirate continued flying on his circular course until we came within range.

“I ordered our machines to open fire at three thousand yards, and the pirate returned it. Suddenly he straightened out his course and commenced to fly due north. We followed up, but he evidently had greatly superior speed and greater climbing ability. We started the chase but he soon outdistanced us, and he is now disappearing over the northern horizon. We were making two hundred miles an hour, but he must be doing close to three hundred miles an hour.

We were hopelessly outclassed. Just as he was disappearing we received a call from him by wireless. He sent us the following message:

“‘You took us by surprise today, and we weren’t ready to engage you. We are not afraid of your superior numbers. We are going back to our base for more ammunition. We shall be back at the same position tomorrow at this time, and will join action with you on the following conditions: that you do not bring any more air-planes with you than you have today; that no other machines are held in reserve; and that you do not send any destroyers or cruisers to this position. We are willing to give you battle on those terms. By the way, we promised to give Miss Ingleton a flight tomorrow.’”

“You can easily see the significance of that last sentence. I will discuss this with you by cable when we get back to our base.—Fitzgerald.”

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Three hours after the dramatic scene had been enacted in Mid-Pacific, Commander Fitzgerald and his squadron landed at their base on Wake Island. After ordering the mechanics to examine the machines thoroughly, Fitzgerald went to the telegraph office where, with the aid of the operator, he resumed his conversation with Commodore Heathcote at Honolulu. It began with a detailed description of the remarkable encounter with the pirate over the vast expanse of the Pacific. It told of the receipt of the wireless challenge from the pirate with its sardonic conclusion and continued with Fitzgerald exclaiming:

“My God, Heathcote, it looks as though he were carrying Miss Ingleton with him as a shield wherever he goes. It certainly complicates the situation for us.”

“It’s a terrible dilemma,” agreed Heathcote, “but we’ve got a duty to perform. Don’t you think perhaps that the last part of his message is a bluff to scare us off and insure his immunity from attack?”

“It may be,” came back the answer, “but we can’t afford to take any chance on it.”

“That may be true,” replied Heathcote, “and there’s no doubt that if you attack him you will jeopardize the life of Miss Ingleton, but we must not allow the last circumstance to deter us from making the attack.

“The pirate may not be as careful of life in future attacks as he has been in the past if he gets the impression that he has secured immunity from attack by the presence of Miss Ingleton on board. It is a stern situation that faces us, but my judgement is that we have a duty confronting us, and that we must perform that duty irrespective of the consequences.”

“It may be just a blind to cover up his operations somewhere else,” said Fitzgerald.

“Well, if it’s a plant,” replied Heathcote, “we will have to take care of the situation to the best of our ability with the other squadrons. They have all been advised now and are on the alert. If he’s on the level about coming to the same position, it’s a good chance to have a go at him. You ought to be able to take his measure with your squadron, if he will stand the fight and not take advantage of his great speed.”

“Don’t misunderstand me,” Fitzgerald shot back, “I desire nothing better than to try conclusions with him, and I’m anxious to get back there. I was only discussing the possibilities of the situation so that we couldn’t get left anywhere. You don’t realize how serious the situation is with me, old man. I may as well tell you right now that I am desperately in love with Miss Ingleton and would willingly give my life

for her, and now I am placed in a position where by doing my duty I may take her life. Oh, I know the dictates of duty allow but one decision, but I'm human. Besides, I have another duty to her parents. I promised them to take care of her under all circumstances. Don't you see what a difficult position I am in?"

"Yes, I understand," replied Heathcote, "and I certainly sympathize with you, but it seems to me the best thing to do under the circumstances will be for you to proceed to the position we located him in yesterday, with your squadron fully prepared to engage him. You ought to arrange to arrive there as nearly as possible at the same time as today. I'll tell my wireless operator and the operators at Guam and Manila to keep a sharp lookout for him. If he starts sending by wireless we can check up on his position and let you know where he is. If he does show up I think that you ought to engage him and take a chance of disabling him if possible. If you could do that and compel him to alight on the surface of the ocean there might be a chance of saving Miss Ingleton. What do you think?"

"Alright then, I'll go back to that position at the same time tomorrow," replied Fitzgerald, "I'll be ready to engage him if he shows up. I'll also be on the look out for any communication from you. I'll do the best I can and instruct every pilot in my squadron to do likewise."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The following day dawned fair and clear, and with everything pre-arranged Fitzgerald and his squadron set out again to the rendez-vous with the pirate, but without the keen desire and light-heartedness that marked their departure on the previous day.

Fitzgerald's heart was heavy with fear but he was now on his way determined to engage the pirate no matter what the consequences to his beloved might be. For the moment he was a man prompted in his actions solely by the strength of a single determination.

From the time his squadron left its base at Wake Island a hundred ears listened patiently but anxiously upon the various islands for the outcome, and the operators at the three big naval wireless stations were keenly alert on their jobs. Each minute that slowly passed by was almost a lifetime of concentrated effort for them. For two long weary hours this condition prevailed. Then came the break in the monotony, as all three simultaneously heard the signals of the pirate's wireless voice.

Feverishly they worked with their Direction Finders. Each moment was precious, as there

was no telling when the pirate operator would cease his voluntary effort, particularly as he must be fully aware by this time that his tell-tale signals were betraying his location to the alert ears of the government operators. Still he continued sending as though blissfully ignorant of the fact.

A few moments of intensive work on the part of the naval operators completed their important task, and a brief cable intercommunication gave the operator at Honolulu all three bearings. These the latter quickly worked out on the chart. The resulting position showed the pirate was practically in the same locality that he had been detected in the previous day. Shortly before this Commodore Heathcote had entered the wireless room to await the outcome of the situation, and he went over the position with the operator.

“Well, that’s alright,” said Heathcote; then as though thinking aloud, he continued, “It shows he has kept the first part of his challenge. Now if he’ll only stand a fight we may get him, but can we save Miss Ingleton, that’s the question? There’s another thing that I’m worried about too, and that’s his willingness to fight. He has already shown that he possesses superior speed to us and he may have another surprise up his sleeve as far as fighting is concerned. I can think of no other reason for his apparent willingness to accept a fight against greater odds. Still if he has such a surprise we might as well learn it by experience now as later. It may mean

the safety of Miss Ingleton. Anyway once we know what it is we can take steps to meet it in the future. One thing I'm sure of and that is Fitzgerald will give him a good fight even if it means sacrificing Miss Ingleton. He puts duty above everything else."

Then to the operator he said:

"Call up Fitzgerald and tell him by code we've located the pirate in the same position."

This the operator did, and then for slightly more than an hour another weary wait ensued for the watchers ashore. Presently came the signal from Fitzgerald that he had sighted the pirate, and this was followed twenty minutes later by the three letter code indicating the battle had opened between the man who had outlawed himself and the organized forces of government.

It was the signal for anxious moments in the wireless station, where the full significance of the momentous battle was fully understood. Would the pirate stand his ground to the conclusion of the encounter and risk Miss Ingleton and himself, or would he again take advantage of his great speed and flee from the scene at the critical moment of the fight? Did he have Miss Ingleton aboard, as he intimated he would in his wireless challenge? Had he really some battle surprise to spring on his unwary but numerous opponents?

These questions were to be fully answered within a short time, but in the period of uncertain waiting that had to elapse before the outcome of the battle could be learned every pos-

sible angle of the tense dramatic situation revolved again and again within their minds.

For ten epochal minutes they waited and then came another three letter code signal from Fitzgerald. Air Commodore Heathcote quickly decoded it.

“It says the engagement is now general. That means the pirate is standing his ground and risking everything. Now we’ll soon know whether he has got any surprise in store for us or not.”

For another fifteen minutes the watchers at the wireless station waited with as much patience as they could command. Then suddenly the operator with almost imperceptible movement straightened up in his chair, picked up his pencil and began to write:

“R. C. G.”

“Good God!” exclaimed Heathcote, “that means the pirate has been vanquished. Get Fitzgerald back as quick as you can and ask him to give us a brief outline of the fight right away. Ask him if Miss Ingleton was saved. My God, get him quick! This suspense is killing.”

Without waiting to reply the operator grasped his key and sent out the call, while the air commodore leaned over his shoulder impatiently. In a few minutes the answer came back:

“I am flying direct to Honolulu, but will stop at Johnston Island for fuel. I will make a complete report. We have won the victory, but I have lost my soul. The pirate airplane was shot

down and sank immediately with all hands, including Miss Ingleton."

Heathcote read the message word by word mechanically as the operator wrote it down. Then in a brief flash its full significance sank deep within his mind, and he collapsed in his chair from the mental overstrain.

"Oh! my God!" he exclaimed weakly. "Have we done right. What shall I do."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Hour after hour Heathcote, a prey to conflicting emotions, waited with patience at the landing beach of the Pearl Harbor seaplane station for the arrival of Fitzgerald from the scene of action. Ten hours after the momentous battle in the skies had been fought the leading pursuit plane of number two squadron hove in sight and quickly came to a landing in the bay.

As it drew up alongside the landing beach, mechanics waded out and carried Commander Fitzgerald back on their shoulders to the beach. He was almost exhausted from the long physical and mental strain he had undergone. Heathcote rushed over to him, and grasping him by the arm, almost shouted in his anxiety.

"Come over to my office quick, and tell me all about it."

The two men walked over to the executive buildings and entered Heathcote's office, where Fitzgerald literally fell into a chair from exhaustion and explained:

"Get me a stimulant of some kind, and then I'll tell you what happened."

A few moments later he began his narrative of the encounter with the pirate:

“We arrived at the position and found conditions about the same as yesterday,” he began, “The pirate was circling around at about the same altitude. I had maneuvered to the north of him to be in a better position in case he should determine to run.

“As soon as we came within 3,000 yards of him I was about to give the signal to open fire, when he began to send us a message on his short range wireless set. In it he said:

“‘I see you have complied with the conditions I stated yesterday. Are you still determined to fight?’”

“I told him I was, and then he said:

“‘Well, I thought it was only fair to tell you that I have Miss Ingleton on board. She is coming out to wave to you.’

“By this time we were pretty close to the pirate’s machine. As he finished sending a figure from the forward gunner’s cockpit, and, after standing upright a few moments as though in doubt, began to wave to us rather weakly. The figure was clad in flying clothes and it was impossible to recognize who it was. There was, however, something about the waving of the arm that suggested a feminine rather than a masculine gesture. In my mind there was no doubt that it was Miss Ingleton.

“The sight of her standing there helpless at the pirate’s mercy, and undoubtedly compelled to do his bidding, made me see red. It was a good thing for the pirate that he was not near me at

the time. I could have torn him limb from limb in my fury.

“The effect on the rest of my squadron was the same. I had discussed the situation fully with my pilots before we left Wake Island and had impressed upon them the fact that duty was paramount to everything. Despite their anger at the pirate’s tactics they were not at all anxious to be instrumental in the death of a woman. Still they were ready to obey my orders.

“I signaled back to the pirate to get ready for action because I was going to attack immediately and not waste any further time in theatricals. That’s what I told him. There was a change of figures in the forward cockpit of the pirate’s machine, which was undoubtedly the gunner taking the place of Miss Ingleton who went inside the machine.

“I gave the order to engage and all our ships opened fire with incendiary shells. The pirate answered vigorously. We soon found the range but he began a series of lightning-like maneuvers that demonstrated the remarkable qualities of his machine, particularly in its ability for rapid climb. He commenced to climb, and we followed him, but we were outclassed.

“He was putting up a magnificent fight, and with the advantage of manœuvrability in his favor, he succeeded in shooting down two of our machines in the first two minutes of the encounter. This loss fired the rest of our squadron with the desire to finish the pirate once for all.

“The action was now general. Our men were

firing every time there was an opportunity. The advantage of superior manœuvring ability enjoyed by the pirate, however, put him in a favorable position of immunity from concentrated attack, because we were so numerous there was a chance that we might hit one another. Consequently our men were only firing when they got an absolute sight on the pirate's machine.

“After a few minutes indulged in these tactics the pirate began a rapid descent, and we followed him as closely as possible. The battle was continued throughout the manœuvre of descent.

“Down came the pirate until he wasn't more than a hundred feet from the surface of the ocean. In this position he went through a number of rapid evolutions fighting desperately all the time. At this altitude he showed considerable daring and succeeded in downing another of our machines. Our men were having more difficulty at the low altitude, especially while turning.

“Quite suddenly it was noticed that the forward gunner on the pirate machine was missing from his position, and for several seconds there had not been a shot fired from any part of his machine at all. Before the pirate could resume action one of our ships seemed to get a lucky hit, and the most remarkable thing I have ever seen occurred. The wings of the pirate machine literally crumpled up, and it plunged into the sea. It was not a nose dive, because he went under at a wide angle with terrific speed, leaving a

tremendous wash of water behind. The whole thing happened so quickly that it was impossible to give an accurate description of the scene.

“We cruised around for a few minutes, but there was no further sign of the pirate’s machine. It had disappeared completely and carried all hands with it. We had hoped to be able to rescue Miss Ingleton, and I landed on the surface and cruised around near the scene looking for every possible chance to do this, but our efforts were in vain. There was not a single trace left of him. Apparently he had sunk absolutely and completely. There was not even a trace of oil on the surface where he disappeared.

“I am sorry to say that Flight Lieutenants Frank, Evans and Dallinger were killed in the action together with their gunners and mechanics. Their machines were completely lost, and we were unable to render them any assistance. That is our story, all there is of it.”

As he concluded, Fitzgerald rose to his feet unsteadily. A marked change had come over him as he reached the climax of his dramatic story. He was plainly in the throes of despair. Upon his face there was a look of horror, and his hands were tightly clenched by the intensity of his feelings. His whole frame shook violently as he raised his arms and then shouted with a frenzy that was almost hysterical:

“I have done my duty,—yes, I have done my duty, but I have damned my heart and soul. For the rest of my life the vision of my beloved standing irresolute and waving her arm with

such hesitant fear in the pirate's machine will be forever before me I cannot cast it from my mind. It remains to prey upon my conscience. I have done my duty, but at what a price,—I am through. Oh! my God! I've killed the woman I love!"

The light of passion died out in Fitzgerald's eyes. He wavered a moment upon his tired feet and then collapsed from sheer exhaustion and mental agony. Heathcote rushed over to him and with some difficulty managed to get him into a chair. He then reached for restoratives and began to apply them.

As he worked the door of his office opened. Heathcote looked up. On the threshold stood Arthur Ingleton, former secretary of the Navy. For several seconds the two men looked at each other, then Ingleton exclaimed:

"Tell me, what has happened to my daughter?"

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Thus came the climax to the most remarkable piratical adventure in history. Glaring headlines in the newspapers throughout the world told the story of the dramatic battle in the skies and brought a sigh of relief to the inhabitants of every country that the menace of the pirate had been removed. Editorials galore were written pointing out the futility of such excursions into outlawry and praising the action of organized government that planned and executed so successfully the measures against the man who had placed himself outside the pale of the law.

Although the news of the pirate's demise brought a feeling of satisfaction to the world in general to two persons in Honolulu it brought calamity. To one, a father, it brought grief over the tragic death of his only daughter and fear for the recovery of his wife who had been prostrated from shock ever since the forcible abduction of her daughter by the pirate. To the other, the victor over the pirate, after a brief moment of merciful oblivion, it brought a state of collapse of all his forces of vitality which set in as a result of the complications that

had followed upon his physical fatigue and grave mental anguish.

Fitzgerald's condition had become so serious after his collapse that it had been necessary to remove him immediately to the post hospital. There physicians were attempting to restore him, but his mental condition was such that they expressed grave fears over the chances of his recovery.

By one of the strangest freaks of fortune, Arthur Ingleton had arrived on the transpacific airship at Honolulu at the dramatic moment in Fitzgerald's narrative. He arrived to begin the quest for his daughter, only to learn that she had been killed.

His was a tragic quandary. On the one hand he found his mission set to naught at its very inception by the irony of fate, and on the other he was confronted with the task of breaking the news to his wife who was already in a serious condition as the result of the abduction of her daughter. What effect would the news of her death have upon his wife? He dreaded the thought. He had already made inquiries as to her condition to telephone immediately after his arrival. When told how serious her condition was he had agreed with the hospital authorities that it would be best not to tell her of his arrival before he had surveyed the situation. Now all he had to tell her, when greeting her, was that Mary was dead.

As he pondered over the situation he realized that he must think before acting. "I cannot tell

her yet," he told himself, "because the news would kill her. Yet I cannot permit her to build up false hopes as the effect of the final announcement might be equally grave. I must await before seeing her and plan out some means whereby the shock of the news will be minimized."

For two days he was impaled upon the horns of his dilemma, with no escape in sight. It was more than two months since his wife had been carried to the hospital after her daughter was taken on the pirate machine. He himself had not been able to get to Honolulu before because of the interruption in the transpacific airship schedules caused by the presence and activity of the pirate. His wife was convalescing very slowly, and while much better physically, was still in such a mental state that her physicians counseled against anything that might cause her further shock. He had consulted with them, told them of the situation as soon as he had learned Fitzgerald's story and asked their advice. They told him it were best for the present to keep the news of their daughter's death from his wife, and also that it would be better for him to wait further before seeing her, particularly as she would unquestionably ask him about **Mary**.

Not only was Mrs. Ingleton in a serious condition, but Commander Fitzgerald was much worse. His long exposure in the flight to the scene of the battle and during the battle, and the subsequent flight to Honolulu, coupled with the extreme mental strain under which he had la-

bored, had produced such serious results that the doctors at the post hospital were of the opinion that his recovery would be a very long process, even with every chance favoring him. In fact they frankly stated there was a strong possibility that he might not recover at all.

During the past two days he had been in a semi-conscious state, but extremely restless. Throughout this period he uttered unintelligible and incoherent sentences in long, rambling speeches, and he had not had a single lucid moment. He had failed completely to recognize anyone who approached him. Even Ingleton who called in the hospital in the hope of learning something from him about Mary's death, failed to elicit the slightest recognition.

Such was the situation at Honolulu. In the meantime Commodore Heathcote and the other air commanders had received instructions from Washington to disband, as quickly as possible, all the emergency aerodromes that had been established for the purpose of coping with the pirate. They were told to superintend the work of transporting all the squadrons and their equipment back to their permanent bases.

This work was already under way. The commercial air transportation lines resumed their normal schedules. The operating companies had lost no time, after the official notice of the pirate's destruction had been announced, in getting back to their regular service. The experience gained since the advent of the pirate and during his brief reign of terror, were the subject of

many governmental conferences. From all quarters came the insistent demand for adequate permanent policing of the distant airways of the world with the most up-to-date and effective aircraft units, so that any possible menace of similar nature could in the future be coped with at the very outset, thereby eliminating any possibility of disruption to the regular aerial transit lines that had become necessary arteries in the world's commerce.

To satisfy this demand two picked squadrons that had been dispatched to the Pacific for duty against the pirate were ordered to remain in Honolulu temporarily until such time as their permanent location for police duty should have been finally decided.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The time passed slowly as the situation over the Pacific Ocean gradually assumed a normal condition. Day after day lapsed into infinity with Arthur Ingleton waiting aimlessly and almost hopelessly, wondering what to do. In this manner two weeks passed by. Then one morning he received a call at his hotel over the telephone from the hospital where his wife was lying, asking him to come there as quickly as possible. On arrival there he was met by the superintendent who said:

“I’m very sorry to tell you Mr. Ingleton that your wife has suffered a relapse, and we thought it best to call you. I will summon Dr. Harrington who is attending her.”

A few moments later Dr. Harrington came into the superintendent’s room.

“There is no use in discussing the situation, Mr. Ingleton,” he said, “Your wife has taken a decided turn for the worse. She is in a kind of stupor. I have been thinking that if we could awaken her interest we might bring about a change and put her on the road to recovery. There is no doubt that your presence will revive her interest, but if she should find out about

your daughter's death the result would be disastrous. What do you think?"

The expression of deep concern and apprehension that crept over Ingleton's face clearly showed his thoughts. After a few moments' reflection he said:

"I think it may be just as well if I go and see her. I may be able to awaken her interest sufficiently to help in improving her condition. If she asks me about Mary, I'll try to evade her question for the time being."

Ingleton followed Dr. Harrington through the hospital until they came to a room where his wife was lying. As they entered, the nurse who was sitting alongside the bed, got up and made way for them. Ingleton walked over to the head of the bed and, bending over, kissed his wife and gently clasped her hand. The patient's eyes opened languidly and glanced up wearily. Then as she recognized her husband, they lit with a gleam of pleasurable excitement.

"Oh! Arthur," she said feebly, "I'm so glad you came. I have waited such a long time for you, dear."

An expression of contentment settled upon her worn face, and Dr. Harrington who stood by watching closely, nodded approvingly.

"I came here as quickly as I could, dear," replied Ingleton. "Now I want to see you get well again soon."

"Oh! I will," declared his wife, and then as in an after-thought, she asked, "Have you got Mary for me?"

For a moment Ingleton paused, thinking rapidly for a reply. Before he could frame one his wife exclaimed:

“Nothing has happened to her, Arthur?”

The unexpectedness of this question coming in the midst of his hurried thoughts left Ingleton still further perplexed and at a loss for an answer with which to allay his wife’s anxiety. With quick intuition she grasped the situation and cried out:

“Oh! Arthur, for God’s sake, tell me! I know something terrible has happened, and you don’t want to tell me. I know it. What is it?”

“There, there, dear,” pleaded Ingleton, “Don’t excite yourself. We want you to get well again. Everything will be alright,”

“Oh! you’re hiding it from me,” sobbed his wife, “you won’t tell me. I know it’s something terrible. I know it! I know it!!”

Turning over in bed and burying her face in the pillows, she burst into a fit of hysterical tears, and her weakened frame shook with the violence of her sobs. Her husband looked on in helpless fear. Dr. Harrington, however, quickly saw the seriousness of the situation and, summoning the nurse, administered a drug in an effort to quiet the paroxysm of his patient. He motioned Ingleton to be seated and not to say anything further.

While this pathetic scene was being enacted in the hospital, another more amazing one was taking place over the Pacific Ocean. The wireless operator on duty at Pearl Harbor, listening

with indifferent patience, had been electrified into sudden action by an S. O. S. call. Quickly answering it, he received a reply from the trans-pacific airship *Montgolfier*, whose operator sent the following message:

“*Montgolfier*, 300 miles east of Honolulu attacked by strange airplane. We are disabled and settling to the surface of the ocean rapidly. Rush assistance immediately. Won’t be able to send much longer.”

Before the Honolulu operator could acknowledge the message, another call came in on the same wave length. There was something familiar about the sending, and he listened carefully. Presently the second station began to send a message. Picking up a pencil the Pearl Harbor operator wrote down:

“Please give my compliments to Commodore Heathcote. Tell him he has a lot to learn about the art of aviation. I hope that Commander Fitzgerald enjoyed his little scrap with us. Miss Ingleton sends her best wishes.”

That was all. Reading it over after it was completed, the operator rubbed his head in amazement and then exclaimed:

“Well I’ll be damned.”

For a few minutes he sent out a series of queries to the sender of the message, but got no further response. He also tried to get in touch with the *Montgolfier* again, but his efforts in this respect also failed. Then he telephoned to Commodore Heathcote and read the message to him. The latter came over to the station,

where he examined the message carefully and questioned the operator about their receipt.

“Good God!” he exclaimed, “if they mean anything at all they mean that the pirate is still on the job and couldn’t have been destroyed by Fitzgerald. How on earth could he have possibly escaped? That’s strange! The pirate certainly had a surprise up his sleeve for us alright. I wonder what his secret is? We’re in a worse fix now than ever.”

Without wasting any further time on conjecture, Heathcote rushed out to the hangars and ordered a squadron of the largest type of bombing machines to fly out three hundred miles east and search for traces of the Montgolfier, and if possible pick up her survivors. Having completed this task and witnessed the departure of the rescuing craft, he went over to the post hospital. He knew the astonishing news would materially affect Fitzgerald, and the fact that Miss Ingleton was safe might prove to be the rallying point for his recovery.

Before he left for the hospital, however, Heathcote also dispatched an officer over to Ingleton’s hotel with copies of the messages to show to the former secretary of the navy. The clerk of the hotel told the officer that Mr. Ingleton was at the general hospital, and the latter went there. He was ushered into the waiting room. After he had explained the urgency of his message, a nurse went to summon Ingleton from the bedside of his wife. In a

few seconds she returned with the former secretary.

‘We have just received word that your daughter is alive and well, Sir,’ said the officer handing copies of the message to him.

Ingleton read them over carefully and slowly, then with a sigh of deep regret he exclaimed:

‘‘Good Heavens! why didn’t I wait.’’

He hurried back to his wife’s room and pushed the messages into Dr. Harrington’s hands, saying:

‘‘Here’s good news for your patient, doctor.’’

Almost mechanically Dr. Harrington took the messages and glanced over them. Then his eyes wandered slowly over to the recumbent figure in the bed now strangely silent, and then, with the light of compassion softening them, they turned upon Ingleton as the doctor, with a catch in his voice, said:

‘‘I’m sorry, dreadfully sorry, Ingleton, but these messages came too late.’’

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

A flight of an hour and a half over the island-strewn waters of Hawaii brought the rescuing airplanes to the scene of the latest aerial outrage. The machines of the squadron were spread out in open formation and had been flying at an altitude of ten thousand feet until they arrived at a point approximately there hundred miles from Honolulu, in the vicinity of the position given in the S. O. S. messages. Now they spiralled down to a thousand feet and began a careful search of the waters for signs of the Montgolfier or her survivors. The skies were absolutely void of other craft.

After cruising about for a few moments, a number of small objects were discerned on the water, and the commander of the squadron ordered his machines to alight near them. The order was quickly obeyed, and shortly afterwards the plane taxied up alongside what proved to be the lifeboats of the airship Montgolfier. There was no sign of the airship itself. Undoubtedly it had sunk.

After a quick survey of the situation the commander of the squadron decided there was ample room in the bomb chambers of the huge

airplanes to carry all the passengers and crew of the *Mongolfier* back to Honolulu, and the task of transferring the survivors from the boats to the airplanes was quickly accomplished.

This done, the machines started back on the flight to Honolulu, which was accomplished in a little less than two hours. On arrival there, special care was taken of the women passengers who were suffering quite a little from the trying experience, followed by the long exposure in the small open boats and the flight back to the Hawaiian capital. While this was being done the captain and officers of the *Montgolfier* were escorted to the office of Commodore Heathcote, where the captain told the story of the loss of his airship.

It was a story similar in detail to the previous attacks made by the pirate. It left no doubt that the airplane which attacked the *Mongolfier* was the same that had destroyed the *Langley* and Wilbur Wright, and had supposedly been sunk during the battle with the squadron of Commander Fitzgerald. Whatever doubt might have existed about the identity of the perpetrator of the latest piratical attack was quickly dispelled by the latter part of the captain's narrative.

"While we were transferring our passengers to the lifeboats," he continued, "the attacking airplane, which had landed on the surface of the ocean, taxied over to us. As soon as it came alongside, a door in the cabin body opened, and a tall, dark man appeared in the doorway and began to talk to me. He wore very heavy

flying clothes, but no helmet. He was a rather good looking chap, and although his flying clothes made him look somewhat bulky, I got the impression that he was slim and lithe and undoubtedly very strongly built. His features were dark, and his skin had an olive tan. His eyes were coal black, and so was his hair. I caught one view of him side face, and he had rather an aquiline nose. While his features were very sharp, there was nothing cruel about their aspect. He seemed to be of a studious rather than active nature, although he was the boss of the pirate machine.

“He asked me several questions about the Mongolfier, what kind of a cargo we carried, and then some general questions about the news in the United States. After a short conversation along these lines he said to me:

“ ‘You will be alright, Captain, Honolulu received your S. O. S. message, and they will be sending some rescue craft out here to you pretty soon. When you get back there, if they ask you about me, you can tell them that I am the same fellow that sank the Wilbur Wright and the Langley. I don’t want to leave them in doubt about that. You know, Captain, I’ve just played quite a joke on them. They sent a squadron of airplanes out a few weeks ago to fight me. I played around with them for a little while and had a lot of fun. I carried it further than I had expected to though, and one of them got a hit on our machine, but it did not do much damage.

“ ‘I decided not to play any further, easily made my get-away. The damned fools thought they had sunk me. Now I am back on the job, and they will never be able to stop me from carrying out my plans and desires. I am the king of the Pacific airways and I intend to be monarch of the entire aerial world before I’m through. I am sorry I was compelled to shoot down three of their machines, but that could not be helped. I am master of the situation and intend to dictate my own terms before I retire. They cannot successfully fight me and they might as well know that fact now as later.’ ”

“That was about the gist of his conversation. He was anxious that I should get his meaning clearly. In fact, he asked me whether I had any doubt what he wanted me to tell you. When I told him that I understood him thoroughly, he started to go into the cabin, but hesitated a moment and then said to me:

“ ‘By the way, Captain, they may ask you about my lady passenger when you get to Honolulu. Her name is Miss Mary Ingleton, and she is a very old friend of mine, that’s why I asked her to accompany me on my little pleasure flights. You can tell them that she is very well, indeed, and is enjoying herself immensely.’ ”

“That was all he said. I started to ask him some questions but he went inside his cabin abruptly. A few minutes later his ship taxied away and waited until we had transferred all our passengers and crew. As soon as we were through, he signalled to us to stand off away

from the Montgolfier. There was nothing for us to do but to obey this command. Immediately afterwards his machine moved over alongside the disabled airship, and some of the crew went aboard. It was not long before they began to pass out some parts of the cargo. As soon as they had satisfied themselves they put off about a hundred yards and opened fire on the Montgolfier, which quickly sank. Without any further ceremony the airplane then took off and quickly disappeared at terrific speed."

"Did you see Miss Ingleton at all while the pirate was talking to you?" asked Heathcote.

"No," replied the captain.

"Did he say whether he had her aboard or not?"

"No. He did not mention her name except in the manner I have told you." said the captain.

"Did you see any other members of the crew?" required Heathcote.

"No," came the reply, "that's all I saw, but it was more than enough for me."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

From the unfathomed depths where lies the mythical locker of Davey Jones, the pirate came back to renew his depreciations over the clear expanse of the Pacific Ocean. His return was more than astonishing, it was cataclysmic. It took the world completely by surprise and left it aghast, helpless, but still infuriated.

What manner of man was this who could so easily flout the power of organized government and laugh at its efforts against him? What hidden powers did he possess that made him invincible in the struggle with a whole world risen in anger against him?

There was no doubt about the pirate possessing some remarkable secret. The unprecedented incidents in his meteoric career of crime amply proved this. How could he be dealt with and brought within the power of the law? That was the problem that had to be solved. It was evident that the steps had already been taken against him had proven woefully inadequate.

The new situation resulted in numerous conferences among the various leading government officers. It was complicated by the fact that most of the squadrons which had been estab-

lished on the various Pacific islands to aid in hunting down the pirate had been disbanded and returned to their bases in the United States after Fitzgerald had reported the supposed death of the pirate. Now there were but two squadrons left in the Pacific waters that were at all adequate to cope with the murderer, and these lacked sufficient speed to make any impression against him.

It was about this time, however, when the problem appeared to be impossible of solution that something occurred which gave the government officers a new line to follow in their action against the pirate. It came as the result of part of the program adopted at the conference held in Washington immediately after the pirate had made his first appearance so memorable by destroying the airship Langley. At this conference George Cowl, Secretary of the Department of Air, had suggested that careful investigation should be made to discover whether any aircraft manufacturer had received orders to build the machine and also if possible to discover the mode of transportation to the Pacific. This, he thought might help in the task of locating the pirate's base.

The proposal had been adopted, and operatives were assigned to running down every available clue, under the command of Captain Charles J. Somers, chief of the Secret Service.

Now after many months of intensive work, the first fruits of the investigation became apparent, and Captain Somers was able to render

a preliminary report. His men had been divided into two sections, the first detailed to make a thorough canvass of the aircraft manufacturing companies, and the other to trace the movements of the pirate in the Pacific prior to the establishment of his base.

The canvass of the aircraft companies had disclosed the fact that about eighteen months previous to the advent of the pirate over the Pacific Ocean, a series of orders had been placed with different manufacturers for airplane parts of special design. The specifications of each part were included with the order, and in each case instructions were given to make delivery to a warehouse in San Francisco upon completion. By careful reconstruction, based upon these reports, it was found that the parts fitted together into a flying boat that corresponded in a general way to the descriptions given by those officers who had encountered the pirate.

There was this important point, however, the theoretical machine constructed from the details thus gathered had several important parts missing. Also the closest inquiry failed to produce any knowledge or information regarding the engine. At that point the investigation came to an abrupt halt. An examination of the various parts and the specifications merely showed the pirate had constructed a cabin airplane of sheet tungsten-steel with retractible wings. The wings were so arranged that they folded closely up to the side of the fuselage, in collapsible style, when the machine was not in flight. A locking device

kept them rigid in flight.

Moreover, the most peculiar thing about the theoretical machine was the fact that there was no apparent provision made for the emplacement of the engine or engines which the pirate used to give his actual machine its prodigious speed. In the trailing edge of the wings, however, there were two fairly large circular holes that could be used as housings for the propeller shafts.

The second detail of operatives had picked up the trail in San Francisco from the address to which the airplane parts had been delivered. Weeks of detailed investigation had followed. Then by carefully dovetailing together the facts obtained, the secret service men were enabled to construct the story of the pirate's movements immediately preceding his advent over the Pacific airways. In outline the story was as follows:

In April, 1952, four men arrived at the warehouse in San Francisco and took charge of the large cases that had been delivered there. A tall, slim, dark man, was apparently the leader of the party, for it was he who gave all the instructions for delivering the cases which were addressed to him under the name of Joseph W. Devant. As soon as he had checked up the number of cases he had them re-labelled, then he told the warehousemen to have them shipped as freight in his name to Honolulu on the steamship Chosen Maru, which sailed the same week.

Carrying the investigation further, it was discovered that this man Devant and his three companions were passengers on the Pacific mail

steamship Nippon which sailed for the East from San Francisco on the last Saturday of April. They took with them as baggage several large cases that were heavily insured. These cases were marked with complete instructions regarding the manner in which they were to be handled, and bore bigger labels upon which was inscribed in large letters: "Scientific apparatus. Handle with care."

Picked up from this point the story showed that during the voyage of the Nippon Devant in casual conversation with the officers of the ship, had declared that he was on a scientific expedition that was about to engage in meteorological investigation in the various Pacific islands.

Upon arrival in Honolulu the cases from the two ships, the Chosen Maru having arrived a few days previously, were stored away, and Devant went around the port in search of a suitable schooner. A few days after his arrival he bought the 500 ton schooner Hilo and signed up the Kanaka crew that had been aboard her. The cases were then placed aboard from the storage warehouse, and the schooner sailed away with Devant and his white companions acting as navigators. They did not comply with the port regulations before leaving, and there was no record of their intended destination.

From this point all traces of the expedition vanished. It had already been listed as a total loss. The schooner Hilo had not put into any known port or island, nor had it been sighted by any other craft.

Such was the report of Captain Somers, which he delivered to Secretary Cowl shortly after the pirate had made his dramatic return to the Pacific airways. Cowl read it over very carefully several times and asked Somers a number of questions in connection with it. Then after further consideration he said:

“There is no doubt in my mind that Devant is the pirate. Did you get any line on him personally?”

“No”, replied Somers, “The name Devant is undoubtedly an alias, but we were unable to get any further information about him.”

“Well,” added Cowl, “your investigation is conclusive, to say the least. The cases undoubtedly contained his airplane, while the other cases then he took with him the Nippon probably contained the parts for his engines and other apparatus he had designed or needed.”

“That’s my opinion, too,” agreed Somers, “We tried to learn something about his ancestry, but so far have not met with any success. I have told our men in the Pacific to continue their investigation into the movements of the schooner Hilo, in the hope that we might get some trace of her. Meanwhile the men in this country are following up their investigation by making inquiries at the place from which Devant sent his orders to the aircraft manufacturers. In this way we hope to get a line on his antecedents. I have issued explicit instructions to my men not to pass up a single chance, no matter how unimportant it may seem to them.”

CHAPTER TWENTY

In Honolulu the greatest consternation prevailed. The return of the pirate over the airways had completely disrupted the service of its airport, which was the most important in the whole Pacific Ocean, because of its central location. The destruction of the airship Montgolfier came at the moment when the confidence of the commercial aerial transport companies had just been completely restored through the report issued by the government to the effect that the pirate had been killed.

Now chaos again ruled the air. Every company had cancelled its schedules, and the only transportation to and from the islands was by means of the slower mode of travel afforded by steamships. The government officials were somewhat at a loss how to deal with the unprecedented situation. Their chances of bringing the pirate to justice were apparently very meagre, particularly as there were now fewer government aircraft units in and about the islands than ever before.

It began to look as though the only way to deal with the marauder lay in the destruction of his base. Without a base to operate from the

advantage he enjoyed in the air over all other types of aircraft would be destroyed. This view had rapidly gained the uppermost support of the government authorities and it formed the subject of an exchange of ideas, by cable, between the officials in Washington and Honolulu. After considerable discussion it was finally decided to commission every available naval craft in Pacific waters to a detailed search of the lesser known islands in an effort to discover the point from which the pirate operated.

Commander Fitzgerald was now rapidly convalescing in the post hospital. His illness had been chiefly due to mental causes developed by exposure and worry. The news that Miss Ingleton was alive and well had been just the tonic necessary to set him on the road to recovery. But as he was not expected to be in a condition to resume his command for a long time to come yet the aerial forces of the government assigned to the duty of attacking the pirate and policing the airways, had been placed in charge of Wing Commander Emerson, who had been Fitzgerald's chief lieutenant.

A new plan of attack was adopted and put into operation. It involved using the two squadrons of battleplanes at Honolulu solely for police duty. These squadrons were instructed to keep the airways open as far as possible. It was decided that other squadrons would be dispatched to the Pacific to aid in this purpose. They were only to give battle to the pirate in case he was sighted, but were not to go outside their pre-

arranged zone of patrol. The carefully detailed plan for searching the pirate out and attacking him had been abandoned because it was conceded that his superior speed and manœuvrability made aggressive tactics impossible.

In other words the offensive had passed from the air to the sea for the time being, so far as the government forces were concerned. The naval craft under orders of Captain Smith, the commandant of the Hawaiian naval district, were assigned to the duty of locating the base from which the pirate operated. As soon as any of the vessels had found this base, their instructions were to attack it, destroy everything within it connected with the pirates' enterprise and take prisoner any one found upon the island.

Practically every vessel in the Pacific fleet was secretly detailed to this duty—battleships, cruisers, light cruisers, destroyers, torpedoboats and auxiliary craft. Even submarines were put to work. Each division was given a certain section of territory to cover and was told to land upon and search every unimportant island within it. In addition to this the commanding officer of each vessel was instructed to make a detailed survey of each island visited and gather whatever information of a scientific character was obtainable. The latter instructions were, of course, apart from the main object of the plan, and were issued with the view of obtaining as much as possible out of the expedition.

In such manner was the new machinery for hunting down the aerial buccaneer set in motion.

The experts in the Navy Department, after carefully examining the reports of the pirate's previous activities, had calculated that the radius of his operations was limited to approximately two thousand miles. Taking the general location of his attacks upon the airships as a center, they had divided the circle within the 2,000 mile radius into six different zones. These zones by a strange coincidence naturally included six groups of mid-pacific islands. The naval patrol vessels were therefore divided into six divisions, each division assigned to a specific group of islands as follows:

Division No. 1.—America Islands.

Division No. 2. Hawaiian group.

Division No. 3. Phoenix Islands.

Division No. 4. Gilbert Islands.

Division No. 5. Marshall group.

Division No. 6. The Carolines.

The task of searching these zones thoroughly was commenced immediately with every available naval vessel. The forces employed were augmented as rapidly as other war-vessels could be rushed to the scene. Then for two weeks the six divisions of the naval patrol went about their task of searching the innumerable smaller islands without any concrete result. Suddenly one morning the light cruiser Farragut of the second division, which was steaming in Latitude 28 and the 180th meridian of longitude, sighted an open boat with what appeared to be a shirt hoisted upon an oar. Captain John B. Moore, commander of the Farragut altered his course in order

to pick up the boat. As the cruiser drew closer to it he made out the name painted on the stern of the small boat, through his glasses. It read: "Hilo Honolulu."

"Hilo," he mused. "Let's see, that was the name of the schooner that was used by the man Devant who was supposed to be the pirate. This may be the boat from that missing schooner, and if it is, we have made a real find."

Ten minutes later the cruiser drew up alongside the small boat. Inside it was the figure of a man laying prone along the keel beneath the seats. An oar had been fastened to the center seat and a shirt was attached to it, evidently to act as a sail. A boat was lowered from the cruiser. It's crew rowed over to the drifting boat and quickly lifted the man out of it and then rowed him back to the cruiser. He was still alive but exhausted. After a few hours of medical attention on the cruiser, the man began to show signs of returning consciousness. Presently he had recovered sufficiently to take an interest in his surroundings.

"Where am I," he inquired feebly. "What ship is this?"

He was told, and then asked who he was and where he came from.

"Take me to Honolulu as quickly as you can, it is very important," he replied.

"Are you a survivor of the schooner Hilo that sailed from Honolulu with Mr. Devant's expedition?" asked the captain.

"No," replied the man.

“Why do you want to go to Honolulu then?”

“I am very tired. Please don’t ask me any more questions just now.”

“But why do you want to go to Honolulu? Are you in any way connected with the aerial pirate who has been attacking airplanes?”

“No! but I’ve just come from his base,” replied the stranger weakly. A moment later, overcome by the strain, he again lapsed into unconsciousness.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

For three days the cruiser Farragut steamed steadily forward until the island of Oahu hove in sight. During those three days the constant care, coupled with the restful influence of the voyage, had proved most beneficial to the stranger who had by now practically recovered from the effects of his exposure. The captain of the cruiser had refrained from any attempt to question the man until he was convinced there was no further chance of a relapse. The circumstances surrounding the man's rescue, together with his statement that he had just come from the pirate's base, were sufficiently important, the captain thought, to warrant him in taking the man to Honolulu.

On the morning that the Hawaiian capital was practically in sight, the captain decided it was time to ascertain the identity of the stranger. With this purpose in view he had him brought to his cabin, and then asked him who he was.

"Where are you bound?" parried the man, somewhat suspiciously.

"We are going to the Pearl Harbor naval station," replied the captain, "in fact we'll be there in a few hours from now."

"That's fine," said the stranger, his face brightening visibly, "I want to thank you very much, captain for your kindness I'll tell my story to the authorities ashore as soon as we arrive there. Have you been looking for the pirate?"

"I don't want you to tell me anything you don't wish to," resumed the captain, "but don't you think you ought to tell me who you are so that I can get you to the proper authorities without delay as soon as we arrive?"

"Why yes, Captain, I'll tell you," he replied. "My name is Howard Redmond. I was the second officer of the airship Wilbur Wright that was destroyed by the pirate."

The effect produced by Redmond's simple statement could not have been more pronounced under any circumstances. It took the captain and the officers who were present in his cabin completely by surprise.

"Good Heavens, man," exclaimed Captain Moore, "you were reported drowned. How on earth did you get to the pirate's base?"

"Well, it's a long story, captain," replied Redmond, "but it's a good thing that I did get there, because I've got information that we possibly could not have gotten in any other way. How much time have you got before you reach your anchorage?"

"I expect to be there in three hours," said the captain.

"That will give me time to tell you before you go to the bridge," began Redmond. "I will tell you how I got to the pirate's base captain, but

you must excuse me if I keep part of the story for the authorities ashore."

"Oh, that's perfectly alright," said Captain Moore, "but quite naturally we are very much interested in anything that you feel you can tell us. By the way, where is the pirate's base?"

"You were not very far from it when you picked me up, captain," replied Redmond. It's on a little island known as Patrocinio which is located about 170 East and 28 North. It's right on the end of the Hawaiian archipelago. You couldn't have been more than two hundred miles away from it at the time you found me."

"Good God! why didn't you tell me that before? I could have gone right there and finished that bird for good," exclaimed the captain. He was plainly angry at learning how close he had been to the object of his quest without knowing it. His anger grew as he rapidly realized the wonderful chance he had missed to fulfill his mission.

"Wait a minute, captain," cautioned Redmond quietly, "it's a good thing I didn't tell you, otherwise nobody would have known where the base was located."

"What do you mean?" queried the captain sharply.

"Well, sir, you don't suppose the pirate, knowing what the result of his capture meant, would pass up an chance to protect himself, do you?" asked Redmond in reply. And without waiting for an answer to his question, continued. "No! Well he hasn't. He is engaged in a very risky

business and he knows it, and he knows the consequences of his capture. He hasn't passed a single chance up that I know of. That island is completely surrounded by a wide field of submerged mines. If you had gone there, captain, your ship would have been blown sky high before you knew it, and then of what good would that have been?"

The latter question was too much for the captain who simply gasped in his astonishment. The explanation, however, had completely mollified him.

"I would never have thought of that," he said simply.

....."No," continued Redmond, I knew you wouldn't, that's one of the reasons I didn't tell you. There's a lot of other reasons that I can't tell you about just now. Well, to get on with my story. I'll tell you how I happened to get to his base. When the pirate attacked the Wilbur Wright I was on the observation platform on top of the envelope. I stayed there watching him while our people were transferring the passengers. I was very much interested in the unusual appearance of his machine and was looking at it through my glasses.

"I stayed there too long.

"When he first came up to us he opened fire with his forward gun, and two of his shots went right through our envelope. One of them penetrated number four ballonnet, releasing the helium gas, and the other struck the stairway running between the navigating room and the ob-

servation post, carrying part of the stairway away. When I started to go down I discovered this. Without trying to climb down the wreckage, I went back to the observation post and walked along the promenade deck on top of the balloon to the passenger elevator shaft. I thought it would be easier to walk down the stairs around the shaft. I was doomed to disappointment again, because I soon found that the shaft had been injured by the second shot.

“It looked as though I would have a tough time getting down. I went back to the observation post and started down the accommodation stairway there. After considerable difficulty I managed to get down over the wreckage. Of course this took considerable time because I had to go down practically hand over hand. I had to do it slowly and carefully, by sense of touch, as all the lights inside the ship had gone out. A slip would have meant a ninety foot drop inside the envelope.

“By the time I reached the navigating cabin all our passengers and crew had left and were in the lifeboats. They had pulled away from the airship some considerable distance. I saw the pirate’s airplane on the surface near one of the boats, and presently I saw someone step over from the boat to the airplane. I found out later that it was Miss Ingleton.

“In the meantime I was in a pretty bad predicament. There was not a boat left on the airship, and our lifeboats were too far off for me to swim over to them. I didn’t know what to do.

I was not certain how long the buoyancy of the remaining helium gas would keep the airship afloat, and then I remembered that the report we had received by wireless had stated the pirate sank the airship Langley after the passengers had left that ship. I was afraid he might do the same thing with the Wilbur Wright before I could find some means of getting off.

“While I was still undecided what to do the pirate’s airplane began to move away from the lifeboats. I watched it a few moments, and then saw that it was coming toward the airship. I went aft to the baggage room and watched through one of the small portholes there. The airplane came right up alongside the Wilbur Wright with its wings folded up. Three men got off and came aboard the airship.

“After a little while I saw two of them return to the place where the airplane was holding on and pass some packages out. I immediately jumped to the conclusion that they were picking out the valuable parts of our cargo and putting them aboard the airplane.

“While I was watching this I suddenly heard a noise in the baggage room. I was standing behind some large trunks and couldn’t be seen from the doorway. I looked around the edge of one of the trunks and saw one of the men from the airplane moving about inside the room. He was still attired in his heavy flying suit and wore a helmet, with a chamois face mask. His goggles were pushed back on his forehead. He walked slowly over to where I was standing,

looking the baggage over carefully as he came.

“I did not dare to move. Looking down I saw a piece of metal pipe at my feet. I stooped down carefully and picked it up for use in case I was attacked. Then suddenly an idea occurred to me which I thought might give me a chance to get off the ship. I figured out quickly that I was doomed to die like a rat in a trap if the pirate opened fire and sank the airship after he had finished rifling the cargo. I decided that if anyone was to be lost it should be one of his crew instead of me.

“I waited as patiently as I could, watching for my opportunity. The man in the flying suit came gradually over to the place where I was standing. Soon he was passing in front of the trunks behind which I was hiding. As he passed on the other side I sprang forward and struck him on the head with the pipe I held.

“He went down like a log, without making a sound.

“I didn’t like the job at all, but I eased my conscience by arguing with myself that it was a case of his life or mine, and that he was a dangerous criminal who had taken part in jeopardizing the lives of women and children. The deed was done now, and it was no time for idle regrets. I set to work and stripped the flying suit, helmet and face mask off him. Fortunately for me he was about the same size and build as myself. As soon as I had got the clothes off him, I put them on myself. I picked up a piece of baggage that I thought contained some valuables,

and walked along to the place where the airplane was moored.

“It was now that my supreme test came, because I knew the slightest false move would betray me. I didn’t know a thing about the pirate’s airplane, and it would be an easy thing for them to detect me. Fortunately, however, another man from the airplane crew was still on board, and I found him making his way to the airplane just as I came along. I fell in behind him and decided to do just what he did.

“At the door of the cabin of the airplane a man was standing. Afterwards I found out that he was the actual pirate. He was very impatient, and as we came along he said:

“‘What the devil’s the matter with you, fellows. Do you think I want to stay here all day, till the government ships come along? Get inside quick.’

“The fellow in front of me muttered some sour remark, and I did the same in a low tone. I really believe the pirate’s impatience saved me. He was so anxious to get away that he didn’t pay any attention to us. I followed the other fellow into the cabin. He went into the rear of it and stowed away a piece of cargo that he was carrying, and I did the same with my piece. Then he sat down on a seat that ran lengthwise along the side of the cabin.

“There was another man sitting on the opposite seat, and alongside him was a woman. I looked at her in astonishment, and then it suddenly dawned upon me that it was Miss Ingle-

ton from our ship. She was looking very pale and somewhat frightened. I didn't dare move or say anything, I just waited and watched. They had given her a leather coat to put on, and she held a flying helmet in her hands.

"The pirate had now sat down at the controls, and the fourth man was tinkering about with some apparatus that proved to be the power plant. Before I could take in my surroundings more completely, the propellers began to revolve and in an incredibly short time we were in the air. I looked at the air speed indicator and saw that it was registering 250 miles an hour, despite the fact that we were climbing. There wasn't a sound from the engine, in fact the only noise I could hear was the whirr of the propellers. The man next to Miss Ingleton leaned over and said something to her. She then put on the helmet and mask.

"I had been wondering why the pirate and his crew wore such heavy flying clothes and face masks, especially as they were in a cabin plane. I soon found out. We were climbing very rapidly. I watched the altimeter, and to my astonishment found that forty minutes after we had left the surface of the ocean we were at an altitude of thirty-five thousand feet. It was bitterly cold. I could feel it even through the flying clothes which were fur lined. The funniest thing to me, though, was the fact that we experienced no difficulty in breathing. We had no oxygen apparatus, and yet we were breathing as easily as though we were at sea level, des-

pite the rarified air in which we were flying. I couldn't understand it at all. Neither could I understand his reason for flying at such high altitudes, unless it was that he had discovered a trade wind that aided him in his speed, or that he wished to avoid meeting government aircraft.

"After we had been going for a couple of hours, the two men in the cabin in which we were sitting got up and walked over to the forward part of the machine. I saw them take up some flasks that looked like vacuum bottles. And then they began working near the power plant.

"I seized this opportunity and moved toward Miss Ingleton. I put my finger to my mouth to caution her not to move or say anything. Then leaning close to her I said:

" 'I'm Redmond, the second officer of the Wilbur Wright. Don't give me away. I'll try to take care of you.' "

"Before she could say anything, I went back to my place on the other side and stretched myself along the seat, feigning sleep. I thought this would be the best thing to do because I might be expected to perform some routine duty about the ship that I didn't know anything about. I figured that if there was something that I should be doing, they would try to wake me up and tell me to do it, and that would give me an idea what it was that I was expected to do.

"Although I was pretending to be asleep, I kept the corners of my eyes open. After a little while the two men came back to their seats. As

they passed me they both looked at me. One of them said.

“ ‘There’s that lazy devil Harrison asleep again.’

“That was a fine cue for me. I now knew what my name was supposed to be, and fortunately I was keeping up the reputation of the man I had killed.

“After two more hours of flying I experienced the slight sensation that told me we were descending and I figured that we must be coming to the pirate’s base. The other two fellows had gone to the forward part of the cabin again, and the pirate was very busy at his controls. All of the other three were looking out of the windows at the ground below.

Very cautiously I edged over a little toward Miss Ingleton. As soon as I was near her I whispered loud enough for her to hear:

“ ‘As soon as we land, I’m going to try and hide myself somewhere. I want you to keep me informed of what is happening and to keep some food for me if possible. I’ll come and see you whenever I get a chance, if I’m successful in getting away.’

“She nodded that she had heard me, and I moved back to my original position, still pretending to be asleep. It was not many minutes before we landed on the water, inside a small coral reef that made a natural harbor on the eastern side of the island. It could not have been better designed for the purpose of the pirate.

“As the airplane came to a stop near a ledge of rock one of the men came over and gave me a light poke in the ribs with his elbows and yelled: ‘Get up you, lazy devil, we’re home. Take some of this stuff ashore.’

“I was all keyed up for the test that now confronted me. I went over to where the packages were stowed, picked up as many as I could carry and leisurely walked ashore with them. One of the other men was in front of me with some of the packages. I followed him into a crude hut that had been erected about a hundred yards inshore and there deposited the packages.

“The other fellow began to pull off his heavy flying clothes and helmet, as they were terribly hot in that climate. I was almost fainting with the heat myself, but I did not dare take mine off. I muttered some excuse about what I wanted to do and went out. As soon as I got outside, I took a quick glance at my surroundings. The island was apparently of volcanic origin and was very rocky. I began to walk over as slowly as I could in my excited state to a rock that was not more than fifty yards away. There was a level patch of gravel beach facing the little bay, and on this were two buildings, in addition to the hut, that had been erected by the pirate and his crew.

“As soon as I got behind the shelter of the rock I paused again to take in my surroundings. Some distance to the westward there was rough hilly country rising to about five hundred feet. I peered around the rock toward the beach

and saw the pirate assisting Miss Ingleton ashore. Two of the crew were making the airplane fast to a ringbolt in the rock. The third man I had followed ashore was now returning to the airplane in his ordinary clothes.

“It was an excellent opportunity for me, I thought. I hurriedly shed the heavy flying clothes and began to run toward the hilly country, carrying the clothes with me. I thought they might come handy if the nights were at all chilly in the higher parts of the island. I continued running for some time, glancing back now and then to see whether my absence had been noticed.

“In the rough part of the island I was soon out of sight of the beach. Then I slackened down in my speed and began to look around for a suitable hiding place as temporary quarters until I could survey the island thoroughly. I wanted to find a place where I could remain safely without detection in case they began to look for me.

“On the south-eastern side of the island I ran into some rather thick tropical growth upon the hillside. I penetrated this, and after a short walk I found a small depression in the side of the hill that was well screened by the vegetation about it. There were a number of coconut palms in this section and lots of banana plants. As soon as I had prepared my hiding place I gathered some bananas and ate them ravenously. I had not eaten since the airship was attacked about six hours before, so I was very hungry. After I had finished eating I fixed up

my hiding place for the night.

“A short distance from the place that I had selected I found a small spring which trickled away into a tiny stream to the sea. It looked as though this would be as good a place as any I could possibly find on the island. It was well sheltered, and there were food and water close to it. Only by the closest search could it be located. It gave me a great feeling of security, and I turned in for a good sleep.

“That’s the story of how I got to the pirate’s base. I certainly was very lucky. Although I was missed that night, they didn’t make any search for me until the next day, and then it was not a very careful one. I heard them shouting, ‘Oh, Harrison, where are you?’, as they looked around for a while, but they soon gave it up.

“I waited a couple of days before I ventured out of my hiding place. During that time I lived on the fruit around me and the water from the spring. On the third day I went out very cautiously and gradually worked my way to the rock where I had first taken off my flying clothes. From that point I made a more careful observation of the pirate’s nest along the bay. For the first time I noticed the schooner Hilo beached in a narrow inlet on the western side of the bay. I subsequently found that she had been scuttled there.

“As I looked I saw the pirate and his crew at work on the flying boat. They were apparently making some repairs. I was glad to see all four of them busy because then I knew that

they could not be looking for me. It was then that I made a surprising discovery.

“I told you previously that I had observed two buildings along the shore that had been erected by the pirate. Well, one of them resembled a long rambling cowshed. While I was watching this particular day I noticed a peculiar wisp of bluish smoke coming out of a chimney at the end of the building. This attracted my attention immediately because I could see no reason for a fire in that latitude. While I looked a couple of men came out of the building and walked down to the airplane. It was the first time that I knew the pirate had anyone else on the island besides his crew, and I was really frightened because it increased the chances of my detection, and I knew that others could be put to work to look for me.

“While I was thinking the situation over I saw Miss Ingleton come out of the other house. She stood still for a few moments, looking over the bay, then she turned around and looked toward the center of the island. I waited for the first opportunity and stepping outside the shelter of the rock, I waved my arm, motioning her to come to me. She saw me almost immediately, and I ducked behind the rock. She turned back and looked toward the bay again, and seeing that everything was going on as usual, started toward me, walking very slowly.

“I saw she had a book in her hand. As soon as she got within hearing I said to her:

“‘Sit down on the other side of the rock

where they can see you, Miss Ingleton and pretend you are reading.'

"She did this. Then I asked her how they were treating her. When she answered me I could tell she was almost crying by the sound of her voice.

" 'Oh!', she said, 'I live in constant fear. They are treating me alright, but I feel uneasy. This pirate is a man I knew in Washington who once proposed to me and I refused him. I am really afraid of him, although he has acted perfectly so far.'

" 'His name is Levanter—Joseph D. Levanter', she replied. 'He was an officer in the aviation service in Washington. He left the service when I refused to marry him, and we wondered where he had gone. When I refused him he told me that he had just done something wonderful and that I would regret my action very much. At the time I didn't pay much attention to his threat but now it seems that he took me off the airship to carry out that threat. I didn't know who he was until we got to this island and he took his helmet off. Then I recognized him and he laughed at me.'

" 'What did he say?' I asked.

" 'He didn't say a thing. He just looked at me and smiled in a funny way. I asked him what he intended to do with me. He said: 'Do you remember the last time we were together and what I told you?' I was so frightened I couldn't look at him. I asked him again what he was going to do with me. 'Don't worry, no one is go-

ing to hurt you,' he said. Then he left me and went away to the airplane to do some work.'

"I could readily see that the situation was very distressing to her, although I could not see her because she was sitting on the other side of the rock. Therefore I decided to change the topic, especially as I was anxious to find how I stood and what the possibilities of any search for me might be. I asked her.

" 'When did they find out I was missing?'

" 'It wasn't until they got through with their work. Then they asked one another if anybody had seen Harrison. That's the name of the man you killed on the airship.'

" 'What did they do then?' I asked.

" 'One of them said: 'Oh, that lazy devil has gone off somewhere. He'll come back. The next day they went out to look for you, but they didn't seem to be very much concerned.

" 'This allayed my fears a great deal. Undoubtedly the man Harrison had a very unreliable reputation, and it was a good thing for me. Later I found out that they would have gotten rid of him before, but they were afraid he might give their secret away.

" 'I discussed the general situation with Miss Ingleton, and we made arrangements to meet at the rock every day at a certain hour in the morning whenever possible, so that she could tell me what was happening and anything that she might overhear. I promised to take care of her to the best of my ability. I was on the island over two months, and it was during that time

that we made plans at our meetings for me to get away from the island. During the two months I learned everything possible about the pirate's machine and plans with Miss Ingleton's assistance.

"While he was away on his flights I went over and examined the schooner Hilo. It was impossible to use her, as she had been completely scuttled. This was done evidently to prevent the Kanaka crew from leaving the island. It was the Kanakas I had seen working in the long building.

"I did find that the lifeboat of the Hilo could be easily patched up and made seaworthy, so I made up my mind to try it. I did this while the pirate was away on his flights. Miss Ingleton helped me by secreting tools that she obtained from the toolbox whenever possible. She also carried food to the place every time she got a chance, so that I would have supplies for my voyage. It was in this way that I made arrangements to leave the island and bring the information I had gathered to the authorities.

"It took quite a considerable time to repair the boat, particularly as the time I had to work on it was very limited. I finally succeeded, however and got away in the middle of a night about ten days before you picked me up. I hadn't been able to get a compass or any other navigating instrument, and through the first night I steered by the stars alone. After that I steered by the Sun, and just let the boat drift during the night. I was trying to make Midway Island,

figuring that once I got there I could get a schooner to take me to Honolulu. I must have drifted way off the course during the night because I had been going for ten days when you picked me up. It was lucky when you came along when you did because I was about all in.

“The time I chose to leave the island was when I knew the pirate would have to spend about a week repairing and overhauling his airplane. I was afraid that if by any chance they discovered the boat was missing from the old schooner — — ”

At this moment a quartermaster tapped on the captain's door and entering, said:

“Mr. Jones' compliments, sir, we are now off the harbor.”

The interruption cut Redmond's narrative short as the captain was compelled to go to the bridge and give the necessary navigating orders to bring his ship into harbor. Half an hour later the Farragut was at anchor in Pearl Harbor.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Out of the realm of his recent adventures Howard Redmond stepped ashore in Pearl Harbor from the captain's gig of the cruiser Farragut. With him came Captain Moore who had refrained from notifying the officials of Redmond's rescue, fearing that the pirate might pick up the wireless message and so become aware of the fact that the location of his base had been discovered.

Dramatically inclined, Captain Moore seized the opportunity of presenting Redmond to the naval authorities in an effort to make it as effective an affair as possible. He personally led the man whom his crew had picked up on the Pacific Ocean into the office of Captain Smith, the naval commandant ashore. There, assuming a grandiloquent air, he announced in stentorian tones:

"Captain, here is the man who has just come direct from the pirate's base."

Pausing, he watched for several seconds with satisfied enjoyment the result produced by his announcement. He was just about to proceed in the development of the dramatic situation,

when Redmond, with graver thoughts on his mind, broke in and said:

“What Captain Moore has told you, sir, is true, but before I tell you about it, will you please instruct your wireless operator to send the signal ‘QVT’ at the end of each sentence when he sends out his daily news bulletin, instead of the usual word ‘stop.’ This is very important, and I shall explain the reason to you when I tell you my story.”

Captain Smith, after a few perfunctory questions, issued the necessary instructions to the operator in charge of the big wireless station at the naval base. He then sent for Commodore Heathcote, the commanding air officer of the Hawaiian district. When the latter arrived Redmond began his narrative. He told in detail again the story he had already related to Captain Moore. Then he said:

“The last time I saw Miss Ingleton I promised her that if I got away safely to Honolulu I would get the naval station to send out the ‘QVT’ signal, so that she would know that I had arrived. That’s the reason I asked you to do it. Levanter has a wireless receiving station on the island and, knowing that Miss Ingleton has always been interested in wireless, has permitted her to listen in each day in order to help her pass the time away. You see, there is no sending station connected with it, and he knew she could not send out any message that would endanger his security. Therefore as soon as she

gets the 'QVT' signed she will know that help will be coming to her very soon."

"If that's the case," said Captain Smith, "you may rest assured she knows it already because the news schedule is on right now."

"Is there anything you can tell us about the machine that Levanter is using?" interspersed Commodore Heathcote.

"I can tell you pretty well everything about it," replied Redmond.

"Can you suggest any means to successfully attack him?"

"Well, you can judge for yourself after I have described his machine and his base," continued Redmond. "I think it will be best if I tell you all about the conditions on the island. It's part of the story that I didn't tell Captain Moore, because I didn't have time.

"In the first place I learned everything about his remarkable machine from Miss Ingleton and my own observation during the short time I was on it. Levanter was quite sure of his security and felt confident that she could not get away from him and with a feeling of pride occasionally told her some of the secrets of the airplane. He did this because, at my suggestion, she took a great deal of interest in his machine and asked him a lot of questions about it. Then she would tell me at different times when I met her at the rock all that he had told her.

"Just what he intends to do with Miss Ingleton I don't know. He has not said a single thing to her that would indicate his intentions

so far as I know, but she didn't tell me very much regarding her relations with him. He takes her with him on his flights every time. He has insisted on that, but on the island, from what she has told me, he does not attempt to molest her, or coerce her in any way. He is in fact extremely courteous to her, and she is free to move about as she pleases to any part of the island.

“Now, as far as the machine is concerned, it is designed in such a manner that it can be flown at extremely high altitudes without any dangerous effect upon the crew who are fully protected within the cabin. The body is absolutely watertight and is strong enough to withstand external or internal pressure to a very high degree. In fact the strength of its plates affords armor protection against normal attack. It is provided with collapsible wings. When these are folded up and all the doors secured the machine automatically becomes a submarine. It has compensating tanks inside that can be filled with water to enable it to remain below the sea without moving.

“When leaving the air and plunging into the sea it goes under in the same manner as the diving type of submarine, and the tail surfaces act as fins, as does also the small projection formed by the folded wings. Once beneath the sea, its compensating tanks permit it to remain submerged in a stationary position, in the same manner as an actual submersible. It is equipped with a telescoping periscope that can be ejected

from the forward gunpit.

“The real secret of the machine, however, is in the design of the engine. It is used for flying, surface cruising, or propelling the machine under the water. This engine is Levanter’s own invention and was built to his special design by the men with him, in a secret workshop. He employs liquid oxygen for fuel, utilizing the expansive force of the liquid gas when it is released from its vacuum container. After the gas has gone through the engine and has been transformed from a liquid into a gaseous state it is then used for breathing purposes in the cabin, whenever the machine is at unusually high altitudes, or beneath the surface of the sea. This explains the reason why we were able to breathe without difficulty while flying at an altitude of 35,000 feet. It also accounts for the manner in which the pirate was able to keep beneath the surface of the ocean after his fight with Commander Fitzgerald, which Miss Ingleton described to me in a very thrilling manner.

“The engine is located right inside the cabin, near the controls. Its power is transmitted to the propellers by means of gears and is applied through a clutch. By the movement of a lever this clutch can be disengaged, and the power applied to the marine screw at the end of the cabin. The marine screw is used for cruising purposes, either on the water or beneath the sea.

“Those are the general features of the machine itself. It is highly efficient in design, and particularly so in its power. That is the reason

he can get such tremendous speed out of it. Miss Ingleton told me he had boasted to her that in one test flight over a measured course, running both against the wind and with the wind, the machine had averaged a speed of 350 miles an hour. Apparently it is only the strong construction of the airplane that permits it to withstand the tremendous pressure at such a terrific speed. The cabin, being airtight, relieves the crew from any ill effects that might result from the rush of air at that speed, while the oxygen from the engine enables them to breathe normally."

As Redmond paused a moment in his description, Commodore Heathcote broke in and asked:

"But how does he get the liquid oxygen for his machine?"

"I was just coming to that," answered Redmond. "Of course, you must understand that nearly all of this information I got second hand through Miss Ingleton. She obtained it from Levanter by asking him questions whenever she caught him in a boasting mood. The whole story of his career on the island as I got it from her is practically this:

"He came to Honolulu with his machine boxed up in parts. There he bought the schooner Hilo and shipped its Kanaka crew. Apparently he had already chosen Patrocinio Island from the map, and the schooner had sailed there. The island is about five miles long and approximately two miles wide. As soon as he arrived he made a survey of the island and decided it was suitable for his purpose. After he had sailed

the schooner inside the coral reef that makes a natural breakwater for the harbor he got the Kanakas to rig up some tents ashore, and then had them carry the packing cases on to the beach. When this has been done, he put them to work, building the permanent log houses. At the first opportunity during night time he and his crew ran the Hilo ashore and scuttled her there, so the Kanakas could not leave the island. They also stove in the lifeboat which I used.

“While the Kanakas were building the houses, Levanter and his crew were assembling their airplane. Among the equipment they brought with them was a complete distilling apparatus designed by Levanter. This was put up in one of the houses. By his own process Levanter obtains alcohol from the grass and other vegetation on the island. He used the alcohol as fuel to produce electrical power for the chemical process that is necessary for extracting the oxygen and later liquefying it.

“One of the two big buildings is devoted entirely to this apparatus. In fact it is quite a laboratory. The tool and repair plant are also located in that house. The other house is used for living purposes, and the Kanakas live in the hut where we stowed the baggage that he takes from the airships he shoots down.

“His condensing apparatus for the extraction and liquefaction of oxygen is very remarkable and complete. Miss Ingleton had seen it in operation, but she could not describe it to me very well. He obtains his oxygen by means of

the fractional distillation of liquid air. In this connection he has a very remarkable cannon on his airplane. Instead of using the ordinary high explosive, he utilizes liquid oxygen with powdered charcoal, which gives far greater explosive force. His shells are really vacuum containers for the liquid gas, and with the aid of a very peculiar detonator he breaks down the vacuum and fires the charge at the same time.

“Of course he is very sparing with his ammunition because he has to make all he needs on the island. When he came there he brought a considerable amount of metal suitable for the manufacture of his vacuum containers, and one of the first things that he did was to construct a large number of small but highly powerful mines that are filled with the liquid gas. These have been submerged around the entrance to the harbor.

“From each airship that he attacked, he has obtained as much metal as he could get, and with it has constructed more mines, until now he has practically encircled the island with them. This leaves him pretty nearly secure from any surprise attack on the island by naval vessels. The vacuum containers he uses to carry fuel for his engine serve their purpose continuously and do not have to be renewed. That is pretty well all I know about his equipment.

“He treats the Kanakas very well, and his men have trained them to do a great deal of the routine work connected with the laboratory. They do not know the game Levanter is playing,

but think that he is engaged in some great and important task, and their child-like vanity is tickled at the work he gives them to do. When they asked him about the schooner *Levanter* told them it was wrecked in a storm. He told them he could get another to take them off the island when he had finished his work there. In fact he has trained them so well that he leaves them on the island when he goes out on his flights, without any fear that they will damage any of his equipment. He has chosen one of them to act as chief and he tells this man just what he wants the Kanakas to do while he is away, and they do it."

As he reached the end of his description, Redmond uttered a sigh of relief and settled back in his chair. It was only a momentary rest, however, as Captain Smith immediately asked:

"Where does Miss Ingleton live on the island?"

"In the same house with *Levanter* and his crew," replied Redmond, "They have partitioned off a room for her, and *Levanter* sees that she has everything she needs. One of the trunks which they took from the *Wilbur Wright* was found to contain feminine apparel, and they have turned this over to her, and so far as I know she is not in want of anything. One of the crew spoke insolently to her once, and *Levanter* happened to overhear him. A great fight followed, Miss Ingleton told me, and the man has been very civil to her ever since."

“Did she ever tell you about her flight at the time of the battle with Commander Fitzgerald?” inquired Captain Smith.

Before Redmond could reply, Arthur Ingleton arrived at Captain Smith’s office. The latter had sent for him, knowing well that the former Secretary of the Navy would be interested to hear first hand information about his missing daughter. Ingleton came in just at the moment Redmond was about to answer Captain Smith’s question. After mutual introductions, Redmond continued:

“Yes! she did describe that to me. She told a very interesting story about her experience. She didn’t know the airplane could be turned into a submarine and consequently it was a very thrilling adventure to her, although it almost gave her heart failure.

“She told me that she was very apprehensive the morning *Levanter* set out. She had been on the machine the previous day when Commander Fitzgerald’s squadron appeared and opened fire upon *Levanter*. The latter had told her of his intention to go out the next day and meet Fitzgerald and fight it out with him. He insisted that she accompany him on the flight.

“‘I implored him to let me stay behind on the island,’ she told me, but he said to her, ‘You don’t want me to leave you behind here unprotected with these Kanakas, do you? Suppose we didn’t come back! What would you do then, alone here with the natives?’

“She tried to persuade him again, she said,

but it was in vain. He compelled her to go with him. She was very excited and apprehensive, particularly when Fitzgerald's squadron was observed coming out of the northwestern skies. As soon as the machines of the squadron were close to them, she told me, Levanter came over to her and said:

“‘Mary, I want you to go outside the gunpit and wave to Fitzgerald.’

“‘Oh! you can't be so cruel as that,’ she said she replied.

“‘You must do as I tell you,’ he said with a savage glint in his eyes.

“‘There was nothing else but to do what he told me,’ she said.

“‘According to her story she went out and waved to the other airplanes. She did not know which was the one Fitzgerald was in, and she couldn't see any signs of a response from any of them. After a while Levanter told her to come back inside.

“‘She did this willingly enough, she said, because she was very scared. It was not long before she heard the firing from the other ships. There was no sound from the guns on Levanter's machine. This was because he was using liquid oxygen explosive.

“‘It was then that she experienced the reactions which she told me about. I shall try to repeat her words as nearly as I can:

“‘‘My heart was beating terribly,’ she said, ‘and I was so frightened that I just simply shivered on the seat inside the cabin. After

a long, long time I felt the machine go into a giddy dive, and my heart went into my mouth. I could bear the suspense no longer. I went to the window and looked out. The sea seemed to be coming right up to us. It looked as though we were falling into it.

“ ‘After a while the airplane straightened out, just when it seemed as though we were about to plunge into the sea. The other airplanes were coming after us, firing their guns all the time. It was really horrible, and I was in perfect terror. A little later there was a dull heavy sound when one of the shells struck our airplane and made it shake violently. As I looked horror-stricken through the window our machine went right into the sea.

“ ‘At that moment I experienced the most terrible feeling I ever knew. A hundred thoughts passed through my mind so quickly I couldn’t realize what they were all about. Suddenly something told me I was about to die. The thought chilled me with horror, and I fell off the seat in a dead swoon.

“ ‘How long I was unconscious I don’t know, but when I opened my eyes again the horror of it all passed through my mind very rapidly. I looked around with fear. I couldn’t see a thing. It was inky black all around me. I lifted my hand in front of my eyes but couldn’t see it. Then I felt around me to find where I was. Suddenly a terrible thought passed through my mind and I cried aloud in absolute terror:

“ ‘Good heavens! I’m blind! where am I?

A terrible harsh voice near me replied:

“ ‘Don’t make a noise, you’re alright. You’re not blind. Keep still, and you’ll be alright in a few minutes.’

“ ‘Where am I? Where am I?’ I cried.

“ ‘Shut up, will you!’ was all the answer I got.

“ ‘The time that I lay petrified with fear seemed like ages. I didn’t know what was the matter, and the man who spoke to me had such a rough voice that I didn’t dare speak again. I was afraid to move or try to get up from where I was lying, although it was very painful on the hard floor, because I didn’t know but what I might fall down in the darkness.

“ ‘After a long, long time, a faint greenish light began to come, wherefrom I couldn’t tell. It increased very quickly, and I looked around to find that I was still in the cabin of Levanter’s airplane. I couldn’t understand it at all. In a very short time everything was quite normal again, with as much light as we ever had there.

“ ‘Joe Levanter was sitting at the controls, and the other men were at their stations. They didn’t look at all concerned. I got up slowly. I was aching terribly from the fall and the hard floor. How long I had been lying there I don’t know, and Levanter never told me.

“ ‘I walked over painfully to the window and looked out. The airplane was on the surface of the sea, but I couldn’t see its wings. There wasn’t another vessel or airplane in sight. While I was looking Levanter said to one of the men:

“ ‘Go outside and see where the shot hit us, also how much damage it has done. I think it must have hit one of the wings.’ ”

“The man opened the cabin door and went out. He was gone quite a while. When he came back he said:

“ ‘It hit us on the starboard wing and it has buckled one of the plates. You’d better open up the wings and see whether they are alright.’ ”

“ ‘Levanter pulled a lever, and I saw the wings shoot out from the sides of the airplane, then I heard a loud snapping sound, and they became rigid.’ ”

“ ‘The man who made the examination went outside again and walked over the right wing. He got down on his knees near the end of the wing and examined it very carefully. From the window I could see a big dent where he was stooping down. That must have been where the shell struck the wing. After a while the man returned inside the cabin and said to Levanter:

“ ‘It has made a very nasty dent in the plates but it hasn’t done any material damage. The wing is not seriously injured, and I think it will hold up alright!’ There was some more conversation, and in a little while Levanter opened up the engine and took off. After three hours flying we were back at the island again.’ ”

Redmond paused a moment and looked around, then he added:

“That was about the gist of the story she told me.”

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Arthur Ingleton with the marks of his recent suffering deeply engraven on his face, sat motionless while Howard Redmond related the thrilling experience of his daughter during the historic battle in the Pacific skies. It was the first concrete information concerning her that he had received since she was taken from the lifeboat of the Wilbur Wright by the aerial pirate. As soon as Redmond finished the dramatic narrative Ingleton plied him with innumerable questions regarding his daughter's welfare and the conditions generally upon the island. Then after a considerable discussion along these lines he asked in anxious tones:

"If we attack Levanter at his base, how can my daughter be protected.

"Well, I've thought of that very carefully," replied Redmond, "in fact the question has been in my mind ever since I first got on the island. It seems to me that the best way she can be protected now is for me to return to the island and get into communication with her. When I left I promised her that I would do my best to come back, if I got here safely, and let

her know what was going to be done. I can get back there easily enough, I think. I have thoroughly explored the island, and know every portion of it. My plan is that one of the cruisers take me back to the island. The captain of the cruiser can arrange to arrive off the island about midnight without any lights burning. He can steam to within a mile of the southern coast, where there is a little cove, without any danger from the submerged mines which do not extend so far out on that side of the island. Then a boat crew can row me over to the landing place on the shores of the cove. We can tow a smaller boat behind us, which can be hidden on the beach, so that if it is possible Miss Ingleton and I can use it to escape from the island.

“When I get back to the island I propose to go to the cave on the southeastern section where I lived before. Then at the first opportunity I shall go over to our meeting place on the rock and tell your daughter of any plans we may devise for her rescue. What we have got to do now is to agree upon some plan of attack.”

“Are you absolutely sure that Laventer does not know that you were on the island?” asked Ingleton, “it seems strange to me that he should not have taken more active steps to ascertain what became of his man Harrison.”

“Well, he did,” replied Redmond, “but I didn’t tell you about it because I wanted to let you know the more important details first. As a matter of fact after my first conversation with

your daughter he did make a very complete search of the island.

“In this search he was assisted by the men with him. Fortunately for me, I got word of his intentions from Miss Ingleton in advance. I cleaned up my place about the cave, so that there was no evidence of my presence there. Then I picked out one of the thickest trees I could find. I climbed up into it and stayed there until they had passed through my little grove. It was a very trying ordeal, but it was the only way that safety lay for me. Believe me I stayed there for a considerable time after they had departed. I wasn’t taking any chances.

“I learned afterwards from Miss Ingleton that they made a complete and exhaustive search of every part of the island. Levanter seemed to be very worried that Harrison might have escaped from the island and informed the government authorities where his base was. He freely confessed his fears to your daughter. That was why he made such a complete search.

“There is quite a stretch of sandy beach on the western side of the island, and during the day after her arrival Miss Ingleton learned that Harrison was in the habit of going there to take a swim. She found this out from Levanter while he was discussing the absence of Harrison with his men. At that time they casually remarked that he had probably gone there and would soon be back again.

“She told me about it when I met her the next day, and consequently I went right over

to that side of the island and took Harrison's flying suit that I had worn on the airplane, with me. As soon as I found the beach I threw the flying suit down carelessly and left it there. I figured that if they made a search of the island they would find it there and might possibly draw the conclusion that Harrison had gone there and had been drowned while swimming. It was the best chance to explain his disappearance that came up, and it practically eliminated the possibility of Levanter surmising that there was a stranger on the island.

"It was a good thing that I did this because that is exactly what happened. They were so afraid that Harrison would betray them that they made a complete search of the interior of the island before they went to the beach. When they were unable to locate him anywhere in the center of the island they gradually worked their way toward the western beach.

"There they found the flying clothes which they carried back with them to the station. Afterwards, in discussing the situation, Miss Ingleton heard Levanter advance the opinion that Harrison had been drowned. At the time of their search, however, they did not take any chance on that belief, because as soon as they had scoured the island Levanter ordered the airplane out, and he and his crew took the air to search the waters near the island, on the possible chance that Harrison might be escaping in a boat of some kind. They thought it strange

that he had not left his other clothes about the beach.

“Because of the fact that he had been missing for three days by that time they made a search for a considerable distance about the ocean in every direction from the island, to make sure that he was not in a boat.

“I was convinced that I would be safe so long as I was not seen anywhere on the island, and throughout the time I was there I was very careful about my movements. I did not relax my vigilance at any moment and was very careful to cover up every move that I made. Even when Levanter was away on his flights I was very careful because the Kanakas were still on the island, and I did not want them to see me. Consequently the work I had to do on the lifeboat of the schooner Hilo was accomplished under the greatest difficulty because I had to keep one eye open for Kanakas all the time I was working.

“I think we can safely dismiss the problem of Harrison, as I am sure that Levanter and his men are convinced he was drowned. In fact I believe they have forgotten all about him by this time. I am equally sure that Levanter is completely ignorant that I was on the island, so we have the advantage over him in that respect. It only remains then in my opinion to devise a plan to attack upon.

“Have you got any suggestions to make that would help us to attack him?” asked Commodore Heathcote.

“Well I haven’t thought much about it.” replied Redmond. “I’ve told you practically all the main facts. I am not very well acquainted with the military situation, but it seems to me that you would not stand much chance against his machine with your present equipment, and personally I don’t think the naval vessels would be of any help, if you are considering to use them. But, of course, my opinion isn’t worth very much, I’ll admit.”

“We might use naval craft to blockade the island and make it untenable by a continuous fusilade of fire from all sides,” suggested Captain Smith.

“The blockade itself wouldn’t interfere with his flying operations,” interposed Commodore Heathcote, “and he could bomb the naval vessels. There is no doubt the shelling would annoy him, but outside of a direct hit on the supply plants, it wouldn’t be of any material value and it might endanger Miss Ingleton.”

“That’s true,” replied Captain Smith, “but I believe it would worry him to such an extent that he would not be able to carry out his raids on commercial airships. He would either have to fight us at the island or else move on to a new base. Have you any other plan in mind?”

“Well, yes, a tentative one,” said Heathcote, “On second thought I think the naval cordon around the island would be a good idea under these circumstances. We have now an excellent description of Levanter’s airplane and in fact practically all the details concerning it. I sug-

gest cabling them to Washington and have the experts in the construction bureaus of the different departments there devise some weapon that we could use to fight his machine. As soon as we get this from them we can establish the blockade around the island and attack him with the new weapon. For instance, what I have in mind is this: If he uses liquid gas for his explosives, there must be some chemical weapon that would counteract the effect of such explosive and which we could use successfully against him."

"Why not place the blockade around the island anyway?" argued Captain Smith.

"Well, the thought I had in mind was that such a blockade would tip Levanter off that we knew the location of his base, and we are not actually ready to attack him. Of course, if we did establish the blockade he would realize we knew where he was located," answered Heathcote, "It seems to me that we can go ahead and make all possible arrangements to meet and check his attacks on the commercial lines until we are ready to fight him, and then go after him properly organized and completely equipped."

"Alright, I understand your point of view," said Captain Smith, "but nevertheless I am still convinced that the blockade would be extremely useful. Even if we did not attempt to shell the island, our very presence would worry him and limit the extent of his raids. Moreover if he should leave the island we would know it

immediately and could wireless the fact, so that our aerial patrols could be on the lookout for him and be ready to protect the commercial ships.

“In addition to this I think that Redmond’s plans to return to the island could be more easily carried out with the assistance of the blockade, and the chances of his getting Miss Ingleton off the island would be a hundredfold better with the navy boats there than otherwise.

“We could arrange a system of signals with Redmond, so that he could keep us informed of what was going on as soon as he learned anything through Miss Ingleton. The blockade would not interfere in any way with your plans to devise more efficient weapons to attack him with. It would assist in keeping Levanter on the island.

“You must not forget that if when we throw the blockade around the island, he should decide to go to another island and establish a new base, it would be impossible for him to take his manufacturing and repair plants with him, unless he made a number of very long flights to and from the new island. If he did this, we could learn of it through Redmond and also possibly learn of his new destination, and then we could take steps to attack him there before he had a chance to fortify himself.

“Personally, however, I think he will stay where he is until the very last minute. He will not take any chance of moving to a new place where we might get him more easily, at least

that is my opinion. Such a move would be too hazardous and too difficult to accomplish. He might fly away and abandon his machine at some unknown place, if pressed too closely at Patrocinio.

"Taking all these things into consideration, I am absolutely of the opinion that the best move we can make is to establish an immediate blockade around the island. We can take every possible measure of defense to protect the naval vessels from bombing attacks, which I don't think will be very numerous, judging from Redmond's description of the difficulty he has in obtaining metal suitable for the manufacture of the bombs. I am willing, however, to put the matter up to the authorities in Washington and let them decide, although I am equally willing to assume the responsibility for ordering the move. In any case I think it will be a good thing to advise Washington completely of the situation."

At this moment Ingleton, who had been listening attentively to the discussion, broke in:

"Whatever you decide, there is one thing I want to say. It is this: I cannot stand idly by while my daughter is in danger. I am going to the island with Redmond when he goes."

"But Mr. Ingleton," objected Redmond, "I think that would seriously handicap our chances. You don't know the island or the conditions there."

"I've made up my mind!" stated Ingleton firmly.

“I appreciate your anxiety and your feelings,” replied Redmond, “and I hope you will excuse me for speaking frankly, because it is a question of life and death for your daughter. You must pardon me, Sir, but you are not as active as you used to be, and this is a situation that needs vigorous action for success. In addition the chances of recovering your daughter will be greatly lessened if we are discovered, and the more of us are on the island the greater the danger of our being discovered.”

“I’ve made up my mind and nothing will change it,” declared Ingleton with emphasis.

“Very well, Sir, if such is the case I must accede to your wishes,” said Redmond, “I only hope that our mission will be successful.”

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

For two long, weary weeks Mary Ingleton watched upon her island-prison, with a patience born of hope, for the news that would tell her of the safe arrival of Howard Redmond at Honolulu. Day after day she sat in the improvised wireless room with the receivers fastened to her ears, vainly listening for the code word they had agreed upon before his departure—the code which meant ultimate freedom for her and the longed for return to her parents.

Her watch for this signal, though weary and lonesome, was actuated by her keen desire to get back to her mother who was deeply distressed when Levanter took her off the airship. She knew that her mother would be worrying over her safety and that worry would materially affect her mother's health. This thought greatly depressed Mary and added to her anxiousness to get away from the island.

Mary had little thought that a long captivity awaited her when she agreed to leave the airship Wilbur Wright at the pirate's behest; and of course, she did not know then that the pirate was Joe Levanter, the man she had refused to marry in Washington. Many times since then, how-

ever, she had pondered over the momentous occasion and regretted the actions she had not taken at that time. At the critical moment when she was ordered out of the lifeboat by Levanter it seemed as though she had done the best thing possible under the circumstances for everybody on the airship. She did not then know what motive actuated the pirate in ordering her to go aboard his airplane, and still less did she dream that her compliance would mean separation from her family, and virtual imprisonment upon an isolated island for many months.

Had she known these facts, she mused, she would have insisted that her mother be permitted to accompany her, and she felt that Levanter would finally have given in to her demands. Many times had she berated herself for not having done this. Now, as she waited for the agreed signal, all these thoughts came back to her mind with greater force to add to her dejection.

Now that Redmond had gone, there came upon her for the first time a true realization of the seriousness of her situation upon the island and of its possibilities. While Redmond had been on the island the thought of personal danger had never occurred to her. She had automatically become accustomed to looking upon him as a protector in case of need. Moreover the attitude of Levanter toward her had been irreproachable. In a vague way she had occasionally been disturbed by fears as to what her captor might do, but as yet nothing had

occurred that would indicate what his intentions were. She was his prisoner, but he had been a most irreprovable jailer both in word and in deed. This situation in particular had been responsible for the fact that the thought of personal danger never occurred to her at any time during her reflections upon her imprisonment.

For the first time in her life Mary felt that something was lacking in herself. For the first time her dominant spirit of independence left her. For the first time she experienced the feeling of helplessness. These new and strange misgivings came upon her as soon as Redmond had started out so bravely upon his mission. Within her heart there grew a feeling such as she had never known before; a feeling she could not define, but yet one which left her ill-content and perplexed.

It was a feeling strangely bound up with Redmond, and when in the grip of it she frequently surprised herself conjecturing upon his fate. Each time her mind reverted to Redmond her imagination painted a picture of him in the open boat, upon the water's of the Pacific; a picture that seemed to affect her mood and bring fears for his safety. Each day this picture was re-drawn in colors more vivid and theme more ardent and hopeless. Thus did she live in each day an eternity of alternate hope and despair. Added to this was the constant fear that Levanter would make the discovery that the Hilo's lifeboat was missing and guess that a stranger had been on his island base.

Then with that malice which the Fates seem to delight in visiting upon human beings in distress the cloud of uncertainty that hung over Mary was lifted only to bring her face to face with despair. Early in the second week after Redmond's departure Levanter came to her and for the first time spoke about her presence on the island. There was something in his manner and his attitude that sent a thrill of apprehension through her.

"Mary," he said, "For what reason do you suppose have I brought you here?"

She looked at him in blank amazement. The suddenness and unexpectedness of his question took her completely unawares, and she was unable to reply. He watched her intently for several seconds, then without heeding her silence went on:

"Shortly after you turned me down in Washington I made up my mind that you would marry either me or no one. You little thought at that time that you would ever be in this position, but I knew then what I could do, and I was certain that sooner or later I would get you. Of course, I did not know that you would make a trip on one of the Pacific airships, in fact I had no idea of such a voyage, but that did not make any difference, because I would have succeeded in getting you eventually. Your trip on the Wilbur Wright only hastened matters."

"Oh! I would never believe that you could stoop to that!" exclaimed Mary passionately.

"Well of course, you may regard this as a

stooping down affair. But I rather think that I have risen to the height of a daring opportunity," replied Levanter.

"What do you intend to do with me?" demanded Mary, her anger overcoming her fear.

"I am going to marry you!" he replied.

"Never! I will never marry you! Never!! I would sooner die." declared Mary with emphasis.

"Don't be in such a hurry to die. Your life means infinitely more to me than your heroic death might possibly mean to you." said Levanter. "Take your time and think it over. Do you really think you can oppose my power?"

"I don't know what you can do, and I don't care," exclaimed Mary, stamping her foot in emphasis. "I will never marry you, never!"

"Well, never is a long, long time and may never come." he replied, with a sardonic smile, "You are a little obstinate just now, but you'll soon see the light."

"You are just a brute, and I hate you!" The last remark of Mary wrought a sudden change in Levanter.

From the forceful, dominating man who had successfully pitted himself against the rest of the world, outlawed himself and resisted all efforts to subdue him, he changed to the pleading attitude of a suitor.

"Now, Mary, don't be cruel. I can't bear to think that I am hateful to you. I love you and you must be mine! Nothing in the world, not even this power that I have and the riches it

brings me, can make me forget my passion for you. I would be willing to give it all up on the condition!"

"I wouldn't have anything to do with you under any conditions," interrupted Mary, "You have got me here in your power, but you can't make me do anything willingly. To me you will always be repulsive, because I think you are a coward at heart."

"But surely, Mary, you don't want me to continue this work, do you?" Levanter still pleaded.

"Don't try to put the responsibility of your evil deeds on me," said Mary angrily. "You don't have to commit these crimes, and you know it. Nothing you say will change my mind about you, or about your proposal. I won't have anything to do with you, no matter what you promised."

The steely determination which shone in Mary's eyes stung and hurt him to the point of madness. He shook with anger and anguish. Suddenly a wave of passion swept through his frame. Lunging forward, he violently grasped Mary in his arms and pulled her toward him. She struggled desperately.

"You'll do as I want you to do," he exclaimed savagely.

In sheer desperation Mary slapped and scratched her captor. Their interlocked figures swayed and wriggled in the room as Levanter, actuated by the unreasoning passion that en-

gulfed him, struggled desperately to overpower Mary.

Suddenly in the midst of the struggle, just as the strength of Mary was about to give out, the door of the room opened, and Walter Johnston, the chief lieutenant rushed in. He was the man who had tried to kiss Mary on the first day of her arrival on the island and had received a violent blow from Levanter for his pains. He had been attracted to the room by the sound of the struggle, and rushed to investigate. Taking the situation in at a glance, he strode over and separated the two.

As Levanter released his hold on Mary he turned ferociously upon his aide and aimed a terrific blow at the intruder. Johnston, fresh and alert, easily avoided the blow and in turn planted one on the face of his chief which sent the latter sprawling on the floor.

"What's the idea?" asked Johnston. You don't think you are going to pull anything over on me, do you? I'll tell you right now that don't go with me. What I can't do, you can't do, chief, and that ought to about settle it."

Levantier slowly rose from the floor.

"This is my affair, Johnston."

"Oh, no, Boss," replied Johnston smoothly, "you've got it wrong. It's my affair, too. We sink or swim together, and what's good enough for me, is good enough for you. That's only fair."

"What do you mean?" asked Levanter.

"What I say," replied Johnston, "you are

trying to do something you stopped me from doing, and that don't go—see!”

While the two men thus disputed, Mary, with her hand over her palpitating heart, stood in the corner, panting from her exertions in resisting Levanter. Her eyes followed every movement of the two men, and she listened keenly to each word that passed between them. For upwards of half an hour they engaged in a rapid fire of violent argument, then gradually the heat of the altercation spent itself. As it subsided, Levanter said with a smile slowly growing upon his face:

“Let's forget it, Johnston. If we quarrel we are lost. You don't understand the situation. Miss Ingleton is an old friend of mine, and I asked her to marry me. The reason I stopped you from molesting her the day she came here was because I was still waiting for her answer, and I hoped to marry her. Now she has refused to marry me. So it's no us quarreling about her.”

“Well, that's alright, you leave her alone and I'll do the same,” said Johnston.

Then turning to Mary, he added:

“You tell me, Miss if he tries to interfere with you in any way.”

To this Mary made no reply, but she experienced a feeling of great relief. The struggle she had just undergone with Levanter had left her exhausted and had caused her great alarm, although it had awakened in her a lively feeling of resentment and determination to fight for her safety and honor to the very last. A hun-

dred desperate thoughts had been engendered in her mind while the altercation between the two men was raging. She would plunge into the sea as soon as she got out of the room. Then came the determination to kill Levanter with the first weapon that came to hand, should he attempt to molest her again. Finally she had decided she would destroy Levanter, his crew, and herself with one of his liquid bombs.

Then the altercation between the two men came to an end, and its outcome rent the curtain of her fears and disclosed the clear path of safety before her. She realized that the bad blood that had been stirred up between Levanter and Johnston spelled freedom from danger for her, at least for a time, and she determined to be wary and never be with either one of them alone, or go anywhere where one of them could be alone with her.

She could therefore allay her fears for several days at least, allowing for a reasonable time to hear from Redmond. Then should such time elapse without hearing from him by wireless, she would know that he had failed in his attempt to get to Honolulu, and then she could think the situation over and make whatever plans were necessary under those circumstances. Until that time she was now determined to compose her mind and wait patiently and hopefully.

By the time these thoughts had revolved themselves in her mind she was thoroughly recovered from her exertions and emotions. With a rapid but cold glance at the two men, Mary turned

around and walked out of the room. She went into the wireless room. A glance at her watch showed her that it was almost time for the news schedule of the naval wireless station at Honolulu.

She sat down at the instrument table and picked up the receivers which she carefully adjusted to her head. Then, after delicately adjusting the apparatus in front of her, she picked up a pencil and began to write as the news message came in.

Mechanically she wrote down word by word the first item of the despatch, her mind following its import just as mechanically. As the sentence terminated her hand had already begun to write the word "stop" which normally came at the end of each item. She had already got the first letter of the customary word on the paper before her, when suddenly she arrested the movement of her hand and listened more intently. In place of the usual "stop" a new signal was coming. Within her mind she repeated it as it came.

It was composed of three letters "QVT."

The full meaning of the signal burst in upon her thoughts. Joyously she pulled the receivers off her head, flung them on the instrument table and with all the fervor of her soul exclaimed, "Thank God!"

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

For several days after she had received the welcome wireless signal which informed her of Howard Redmond's safe arrival in Honolulu, Mary Ingleton constantly speculated on the possibilities of her early escape from her island prison. Ever since her terrific struggle with the aerial pirate shortly before she received the wireless signal she had been greatly perturbed. Would Redmond be able to get assistance quickly and come to her rescue before Levanter tried to molest her again? Would Johnston keep his promise and interfere against his chief, if Levanter should again force his unwelcome attentions upon her; or would Levanter succeed in placating his assistant by some arrangement and then renew his attentions? These were the thoughts which ran successively and repeatedly through Mary's mind and disquieted her greatly. Her fears were greatly enhanced by the persistency with which she dwelled upon them, for the lack of anything else to do.

Since the incident with Levanter that was ended by the abrupt appearance of Johnston, she had not been molested again. Levanter had remained aloof from her and busied himself with

the affairs of his criminal enterprise. The repair work on the airplane that had been started just before Redmond's departure had not yet been completed, and Levanter was busy each day superintending it. It included a complete overhaul of both the machine and its engine.

While dwelling on the problems before her, Mary was considerably worried that Levanter might at any moment walk over to the place where the wreck of the Hilo was lying piled up on the beach and there discover that the lifeboat of the schooner was missing. The more she thought of this possibility the more worried she became, for she felt certain that if the fact that the lifeboat was gone should be discovered, Levanter would logically surmise that a stranger had been on the island. She was sure that in that case the strange disappearance of Harrison would again crop up in his mind and arouse his suspicions.

As she turned this problem over in her mind Mary tried to think of some way of solving it. Suddenly an idea occurred to her. Why not get hold of one of Levanter's chemical bombs at the first opportunity, plant it under the Hilo and blow the schooner to fragments? This done, there would not be any possible chance of the pirate's discovering the disappearance of the lifeboat, and all fears on that score would be eliminated.

No sooner had the idea occurred to her than Mary began revolving in her mind a possible way of putting it into effect. In the first place

she did not know just how the bombs were operated. All she knew about them was what Levanter had told her in a casual way at different times. She knew that they were filled with liquid gas and that there was a special detonating arrangement that broke down the vacuum of the container and released the gas so rapidly that it emerged with terrific explosive force. How this detonating device worked she did not know.

She fully realized that it would be extremely difficult to obtain one of the bombs and very dangerous to place it underneath the Hilo in such manner as to ensure the destruction of the schooner. Before she could attempt this, therefore, she had to find out how to handle the bombs, also if there was any way in which they could be exploded by a time arrangement, so as to enable her to get away to safety before the bomb exploded after she had placed it under the Hilo.

Having recognized these facts, she decided, after further thought on the matter, that the only way to obtain the necessary information would be from Levanter himself. In order to do so, she realized that she would have to get on speaking terms with him again. This was extremely repugnant to her, but she decided that it could not be avoided under the circumstances. Therefore she made up her mind to submerge her own feelings in order to achieve the purpose she had in view, which was very vital to her safety and indispensable for her escape from the island. She relied upon the quick return of

Howard Redmond to counteract any advances that Levanter might make after she had resumed speaking relations with him.

Now that she had made this decision Mary waited until Levanter was in a good humor and not pre-occupied with the repair work on his airplane. At the first available opportunity she approached him and said:

"I have been thinking things over, and it seems to me that it is very silly for us to be sulky. I am perfectly willing to be friendly with you, if you will not try to interfere with me again as you did the other day. Why can't you promise me to act like a man and put an end to this ridiculous situation?"

"What's the idea?" asked Levanter in reply, "I thought you said you hated me."

"Well, you must admit that was your own fault," replied Mary. "After thinking it over I don't believe that you were really responsible for your actions then, so I am willing to forgive you, if you will only promise not to do anything like that again."

"I don't quite understand you," said Levanter suspiciously. "There must be some reason for the sudden change in your attitude now. What is it?"

"Well, I am very lonesome here, and it is very unpleasant not to be able to talk to anyone."

Levanter began to thaw with this explanation, and he actually smiled.

Did she really mean what she said?

"Well, I think you are right to a certain point.

I am glad that you are at last beginning to realize that there is no escape from fate. That makes things much simpler for us. I don't see though why I should promise you anything. I can say this however. I may be blamed for my actions, but I don't have to defend any motives. I love you, I have always loved you, and I believe I shall always love you."

"Well, I accept your apology," said Mary. "But why can't you forget what you have just said? You know I don't love you. I have said that often enough for you to realize it. I have always been determined to marry no one but the man I love. I don't intend to marry anyone. Let us agree to bury the hatchet, forget all these things and live amicably, since I must stay on the island. But tell me, what are your intentions toward me. Surely you are not going to keep me here all my life. Surely, you don't intend to live here yourself, do you?"

"I don't know yet," replied Levanter. "I haven't made up my mind what I am going to do. Why do you ask that?"

"Oh, I was just wondering what you intend to do. It explains my reason for wanting to be on speaking terms with you again. I didn't think that you would live here forever. I felt sure that some time you would quit this island, and of course I didn't expect you to be so cruel as to leave me here after you left. I was sure that when you did leave, you would find some way to let me get back to my parents."

"You can go back to them immediately if you

promise to marry me," declared Levanter.

"Now, there you are again, returning to that forbidden subject," replied Mary. "Why can't you agree to forget that. You know what my answer is now."

Suddenly, as she reached this stage in the conversation, an opening occurred to Mary. She would dissemble her real feelings and hold out a hope to the man she despised and hated. Intuitively she felt certain that he would immediately jump at the possibility offered indirectly to him and promise not to interfere with her again while she was on the island. Then having obtained this promise, she could go about her task of destroying the Hilo and lay such other plans to assist Howard Redmond when he returned, as were possible under whatever circumstances might develop. These thoughts flashed quickly through her mind as she was talking, and with only a slight pause to go over them again and make sure of herself, she continued:

"Of course, whether my answer will always be 'No', I cannot say at the present, but you will not get me to change my mind if you keep on forcing your attentions upon me, that is certain."

Mary had angled well and caught her victim on the well prepared hook. Like a fish Levanter rose to the bait and grasped it. The hope contained in Mary's simple statement arose before Levanter with all its possibilities.

"I think you are right," he replied slowly.

“What I did the other day was done in the heat of passion, and I was not really responsible. I am very sorry and I hope you will forgive me.”

As he said this Levanter extended his hand toward Mary. She grasped it and shook hands with him on the compact. She did it with an apparent show of sincerety, but in her heart there was the bitterest of feelings. She despised herself for doing it, and she still more despised the man whose hand she shook. She consoled herself, however, with the thought that what she had done was necessary to her own safety and freedom, and that the treachery of the man who held her in his power could only be overcome by stratagem on her part, much as she disliked to employ it.

Following the conclusion of the compact, the two continued to converse generally until Levanter was called away by the men working on the airplane. Mary felt that it would be extremely unwise to question the sky pirate on any matter concerning his enterprise so shortly after the reconciliation with him. It would be much better to wait a few days she thought and be extremely friendly with him until he was completely disarmed regarding her intentions before she asked him any questions. Otherwise, she argued with herself, he might guess the reason for such pertinent questions and know that she had approached him solely to get the information wanted.

And so several days passed by without further incident of any kind. Each day Mary made it a

point to chat with her captor on some trivial subjects, in order to get him completely off his guard. Meanwhile she had been thinking over the details of her plan. She knew that as long as Levanter was busy with the repair work on his airplane there was very little chance that he would go over to that part of the harbor where the Hilo was lying beached.

As soon as the repair work was completed, however, there was every possibility that he might go over there and discover that the lifeboat was missing. Consequently there was no time to be lost in completing her arrangements.

If she were successful in the task of destroying the Hilo she could take similar steps against the remarkable airplane of Levanter. If she could only shatter one of its wings, or damage its hull, it would be impossible for the sky pirate to take the air again for several months, while there was the possibility that the machine might be completely wrecked. Even if it were only slightly damaged it would give Redmond sufficient time to organize any help that he might need in getting back to the island and rescuing her.

No sooner had this thought occurred to her than Mary began to debate in her mind whether it would not be better to go right out and blow up the airplane instead of the schooner Hilo. If the airplane were destroyed, she argued, it would not make any difference whether Levanter discovered that the Hilo's boat was missing or not, because he could not leave the island anyhow. If she succeeded in doing this com-

pletely it would be a very important thing, and she might be able to do it without attracting suspicion if she went about it carefully. In fact, she continued in her mental argument, Levanter might think that the explosion had been caused by a bomb left on the airplane.

Should she try to blow up the airplane or the Hilo? That was now the all important question in her mind. If she made her attempt on the airplane and failed she might not get another chance, and there was a very great possibility of failure until she had learned how to handle the bombs properly. In the event of failure through premature explosion, or any other similar cause, both Levanter and his crew would be extremely careful with the remaining bombs, particularly as to where they left them, and her chances of getting another would be eliminated.

On the other hand if she made the attempt on the schooner Hilo and it was unsuccessful, she felt certain that Levanter would attribute the explosion to the washing up of one of his mines ashore, and then she would have another chance to try again. Besides, she would learn something from her failure if she did fail. If her attempt was successful, Levanter and his men might still think that the explosion was from one of the mines washed up from the sea. In that case she would have sufficient knowledge in the use of the mines to make the attempt on the airplane at the earliest possible moment.

About a week after Mary had made her reconciliation with Levanter the opportunity she had

been looking for arrived. She was conversing with her captor, and he was in an exceptionally good humor. While she was talking with him, Johnston came over and said:

“Say, Boss, we’ve used up all our supply of metal, we’ll have to get some more somewhere for the extra vacuum containers.”

After the two men had discussed this for a little while Johnston left and went over to the workshop. As Levanter turned back to her Mary asked:

“Aren’t you afraid that one of the bombs might wash up from the sea and explode?”

“Oh, no,” he replied. “There wouldn’t be any danger unless they were thrown violently against some object. They have a contact detonator, and as long as the detonator didn’t touch anything they would be harmless.”

“Well, I’m glad to hear that,” replied Mary, “because I was a little alarmed over it.”

“You needn’t be, there’s no danger,” declared Levanter.

“Well, you know that’s stupid of me,” said Mary, “I always thought that bombs and explosive things went off with some kind of a fuse, some kind of timing arrangement, if you get what I mean.”

“They can be made to explode that way,” replied Levanter, “but my bombs are not constructed to explode with time fuses, although they could be set to go off at any pre-determined time. Only the shells we use in the guns have the timing arrangement.”

“How interesting, but of course I am very ignorant of those terrible things. I thought they all went off by time.”

“Oh, no. Of course, I am very proud of those bombs because they are my own invention,” continued Levanter. “The bombs are put in the sea for protection against any fool government war vessels that might come snooping around. A time fuse wouldn’t be of any use for that purpose, because we don’t know when they might come along. If they do come here they will hit one of those mines we’ve got laid around the island and explode it. That would be the end of the snooper.”

“But that’s terrible!” exclaimed Mary, her horror at the thought momentarily overcoming her effort to dissemble her real feelings. “That’s downright murder!”

“Oh, don’t worry Mary,” replied Levanter soothingly. “We don’t expect any of them around here. It’s only a precautionary measure I was compelled to take to protect us here. Even if they did come and strike one of the mines we could rescue the crew and make them prisoners. You see we could then use them as hostages, and they wouldn’t be able to go back and disclose my secret place.”

“But how would you be able to control such a large number of men?” persisted Mary.

“Well, if such a thing were to happen we would find some means of doing it, but we don’t expect such a thing. Anyway, Mary, you know

it can be stopped any time you say the word," said Levanter looking at her significantly.

"Oh, please, please don't. You promised not to talk about that, can't you keep your word?" entreated Mary.

"Alright, let's forget it. I don't see how this conversation started. I'm so confounded proud of these bombs that I suppose I went too far in talking about them. It can't be very interesting to you."

"I realize that you must be proud of them," agreed Mary, "and really I am very much interested in them, although it's too deep for me to understand, but I should like to see how you make them. I have never been inside your workshop, and it would help me to pass the time away."

"That's alright," said Levanter, "you can come in any time."

After a further brief conversation he offered to take her over the shop right away. She readily assented because she was impatient to get her task completed, especially as the repair work on the airplane was almost done.

They strolled over to the house where the entire mechanical plant of Levanter was installed. He showed her the distilling plant with which he made his alcoholic fuel. Then he led her into the room where the liquid oxygen was produced that gave him the energy to fly his airplane. He explained it all to Mary, and she listened carefully, although somewhat impatiently.

Next he took her into the room where the vacuum containers for the liquid gas were made. There were two types of containers, one to carry the fuel for the airplane, and the other for use as bombs. In the former there was a remarkable siphon arrangement that permitted the liquid gas to flow freely into the engine, where its expansion was allowed to take place in such manner that the energy spent by the gas in expanding from the liquid to the gaseous state was fully utilized in the propulsion of the airplane.

The second type of container was equipped with a vacuum cap that included the detonator, thus making the whole thing a very ingenious bomb when filled with the liquid gas. Levanter explained to Mary that a little charcoal was included in the container, as it added to the explosive force of the liquid gas.

After expressing her unqualified admiration at the ingeniousness of their construction, Mary questioned her captor as closely as she dared regarding the details of the bombs. She was anxious to learn as much as possible about them without appearing to be over-curious, or arousing the suspicion of Levanter. At the time he showed her around his plant there were none of the shells used in his cannon under construction but only the bombs which were used to form a protective belt around the island. Picking one up, Levanter explained it to her in detail. He showed her where the liquid gas was placed and how it was put it. Next he showed her the mechanism of the detonator and explained its ope-

ration. It was extremely fortunate for Mary that this was the only type under construction, as it suited her purpose admirably, if she could but get possession of one of them.

While Levanter was showing her over the plant she had carefully noted every detail of each room, the position of the doors, and the way in which they swung open. She observed the position of the fixtures in each room and the position of the clear spaces. She had made a complete mental picture of the place, sufficient, she thought, to enable her at any time to enter and find her way without difficulty and without stumbling into anything in case it were necessary to go there at night. In fact she had noted the place with such extreme care that she had paid but little attention to Levanter while he was describing many of the things to her, until she arrived in the bomb construction room. There she gave her undivided attention to him, because of her desire to learn just how to handle the dangerous things.

Immediately after Levanter had finished his description, Mary turned to him with an assumed air of ignorant simplicity and asked:

“I don’t see how you dare carry those dreadful things around if they are arranged to explode on contact. Aren’t you afraid that you might press one of those contacts while you are carrying them?”

“There’s no danger of that,” replied Levanter laughing. “You see this little gadget here on the side,” he asked pointing to a small switch

button, "well, when that is pushed over this way it locks the contact studs, and they cannot be pressed inward. That button is really a safety lock. When it's in this position the studs can't be pressed in, and therefore the bomb cannot be exploded. That makes it absolutely safe to carry around. When we are planting these mines in the sea we have the safety button on, and take it off just as we lower the mine into the sea."

"That's just what I didn't understand," said Mary. "What stops the mines from being washed ashore?"

"We anchor them with a weight. You see, we haven't got any real anchors, because we haven't got any metal to spare, but we get a great big heavy rock and tie the mine to it and then drop it overboard."

"But aren't you afraid that two of the mines will hit each other? They must sway about in the water."

"Well, naturally the movement of the water does that," replied Levanter, "and the tides also move them, but we know the length of the rope we use, and we make allowances for that. You see, we plant them so far apart that no matter in what direction they move in, they cannot hit one another. Then we make the whole field wide enough so that a ship trying to come to the island would be bound to hit one of them."

"How interesting," said Mary, carefully concealing the horror she felt at the diabolical plan unfolded by the man.

"Yes," answered the pirate, "we are going to

plant a few more of these tomorrow. We are going out in the airplane and will cruise there on the surface. Would you like to come along with us, and see how we do it?"

"Yes, indeed," said Mary.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Over in Honolulu Howard Redmond had gradually become aware of a feeling, more important but not nearly as thrilling as his adventure on the sky pirate's remarkable airplane. It was a feeling destined to change the entire course of his life. It came during the period of impatient waiting while trying to overcome red tape and get official action that would help him to return to Patrocinio Island, and when it became part and parcel of his consciousness he realized that a mighty change had taken place in his whole being.

For the past three months he had led a life of such intense action and adventure, that he had had no time for aught else. The delays he had experienced in Honolulu had caused him to concentrate his thoughts upon Mary Ingleton who was languishing in the power of the pirate Levanter upon an island far removed from civilization, and had intensified his desire to rescue her at all hazards. While dwelling upon this problem the conviction suddenly came over him that his desire to rescue her was not prompted by the mere sense of chivalry in aiding a woman in distress, but that his feelings toward Mary

were entirely above that. For several days he was in a daze, trying to define these feelings. He turned all the forces of his mind upon his problem in an effort to analyze it, but failed; then in the very moment of failure a new intuitive power he had suddenly gained spread before him the cause of his new sensation. He was in love! In love with Mary Ingleton!

This sudden realization had a profound effect upon Redmond. He was in all respects a typical man of the air. Women had always played a natural but quite incidental part in his existence. They were a necessary part of his life and surroundings insofar as all human association is necessary. His whole attention had always been concentrated upon the details, both technical and practical, of his chosen profession. He was a stolid individual, naturally shy and bashful in the presence of the other sex. There was not the slightest thing in his make-up that would suggest the "ladies man", in fact he was the very antithesis to all that is implied by the comprehensive phrase.

His relationship with Mary Ingleton had been thrust upon him by the force of circumstances, and his attitude toward her had always been extremely diffident. He had made his perilous voyage on the Pacific in the small open boat as a matter of duty. His anxiety to return and assist her had at first been governed by the same feeling, but the delay in getting started had rapidly developed the change that her entry into his life had caused.

Now for the first time in his life he experienced the pangs and pleasures of the feeling which he defined as love. It tempered his impatience with tenderness while all the time growing in intensity. It enthroned within his heart the picture of the girl he was anxious to succor and cast about her the halo of purity and charm.

While he was still kicking his heels in the office of Captain Smith, the naval commandant, waiting for the official action which would send him back as fast as a cruiser could carry him to the woman whose influence had worked such a wondrous change within him, in strolled Kenneth Fitzgerald, who was just convalescing from the effects of the battle with the pirate and the violent emotions which he experienced during the period of the battle. It was his first day out of the hospital. He had been informed of the arrival of Redmond in Honolulu and of the manner in which the officer of the airship Wilbur Wright had been picked up at sea. He had also been told in substance the story Redmond had brought back from Levanter's base.

As Fitzgerald entered the room, still feeble from the effects of his lengthy illness, Captain Smith looked up and walked over to greet the air commander. After a brief conversation he turned to Redmond and said:

"Redmond, I want you to meet Wing Commander Fitzgerald. He is the man who commanded our air forces in the fight with Levanter."

Then with a smile and knowing wink he added innocently enough:

“And I can whisper to you confidentially that he is madly in love with the young lady you are anxious to rescue.”

It was then that jealousy laid its bitter grip upon Howard Redmond for the first time in his eventful life. He grasped the hand that Fitzgerald extended to him with such force that the latter winced with pain.

“Good Lord!” he exclaimed weakly though smilingly, “you nearly broke my hand,” then with an apologetic air he continued: “I’m still pretty sick you know.”

It was several seconds before Redmond dared trust himself to speak. During that brief period his mind was consumed with many bitter thoughts. He knew that Fitzgerald had known Mary for a long time, that they had been passengers together on the ill-fated Wilbur Wright, and Mary had often spoken of him on the island. Now he had been told by Captain Smith that Fitzgerald loved her. Apparently it was an open secret and therefore Mary must know it too.

Did Mary love Fitzgerald? That was the question with which jealousy now tortured him. As the thought entered his mind with the full force of its possibilities he looked into the eyes of his unwitting rival and then remembered what Fitzgerald had just said:

“Excuse me,” he replied, “I was so busy

thinking of getting back to assist Miss Ingleton that I didn't realize what I was doing."

As he spoke a momentary flush of red tinged Redmond's tanned and weather-beaten face. The suffusion was caused by his natural ingrained honesty which rebelled at the untruth he was uttering. It was the first time in his life he had ever dissembled his real feelings, and the novelty caused him to blush with shame.

All this was unnoticed by Fitzgerald, who replied easily enough, "Oh, that's alright. I know how you feel. My God, I feel worse. I'm dying to go with you, but the doctors here won't let me. I'm not only anxious to help Mary, but I have a great score to settle with Levanter, and by God I intend to make him pay in full."

"It's just as well you can't go," said Redmond, "because it would only add to our difficulties. I know the island thoroughly, and it would be much better if I went alone. I've been trying to convince Mr. Ingleton of this, but he will not listen to me, so I've got to take him along. It will seriously handicap me."

Redmond had scarcely finished talking when the door opened and Arthur Ingleton entered.

"That's funny," said Fitzgerald to the newcomer, "we've just been talking about you."

"I hope it was nothing bad," replied Ingleton laughingly. Then, before he could say anything further, Captain Smith, who had been talking over the telephone, came over and said:

"I've got some good news for you, gentlemen. I just got word from the cable operator that he

had received a message from Washington authorizing me to send the cruiser Farragut to Patrocínio Island and take both of you there.”

“Have they worked out a plan? asked Redmond eagerly. “Yes, the message outlines the plan of action. Captain Moore has been chosen because he is familiar with the waters around the island. He is to take you there and arrange to arrive off the island at sundown, then row you ashore and land you on the beach Redmond has described. Captain Moore is to come within sight of the cove at a certain time each night that you and he will arrange. Then if you have any information to give him, Redmond can send it by means of a small portable reflected wave wireless set he will give you. If it is important enough Captain Moore will send it to us by wireless, using the special naval code. All the details you can arrange with him.”

“You are not going to put a blockade around the island then, Captain?” inquired Redmond.

“No,” replied Captain Smith, “it has been decided best not to do this until everything is in readiness to attack the pirate with every possibility of success. What do you propose to do after you get on the island?”

“Well,” said Redmond, “I think it would be best to get Miss Ingleton away from it the first possible chance we have. I think that I ought to have a boat left at the cove were we land. There is plenty of opportunity to hide it there in the vegetation, and the crew of the cruiser can help us to drag it ashore. If the cruiser is

going to remain within steaming distance all the time, I would suggest that a light boat be left with us, one that we could readily carry and launch."

"Oh, certainly," said Captain Smith, "everything possible will be done to assist you. Captain Moore will be given instructions to give you anything you need, and give you every possible assistance that he can. I would suggest that you confer with him and arrange all your details together. By the way, if you are successful in getting Miss Ingleton off the island would you be willing to remain there afterwards and give us whatever information you could gather about the pirate, until we have captured him?"

"Why, I would be delighted to do that," Redmond answered, "first efforts, however, will be directed toward getting Miss Ingleton away from the island. You can understand that, of course. After that I will do everything that I possibly can to get information for you that may be of use in your operations against him."

"We appreciate your offer, said Captain Smith. "We will keep in touch with you at all times, and if it is necessary for you to remain on the island after Miss Ingleton has been taken off, you may rest assured that we will stand by you all the time."

Immediately after this conference Redmond tried again to dissuade Mary Ingleton's father from accompanying him to the island. He brought every argument that he could think of to bear in the attempt to discourage the former

secretary of the navy from making the trip.

“It would be just as well if you went with us on the cruiser and remained aboard while I went ashore,” he said to Ingleton. “You would be fully posted there as to what was taking place, and you could be ready to come ashore at a moment’s notice if it were necessary for me to have assistance. But don’t you see how much it will add to the danger if you come ashore with me right away. It will make it so much easier for the pirate or his men to discover us. Not only that, but in case there is a chance of getting your daughter off the island, it will add to the dangers of our trip in the small light boat, before the cruiser picks us up.”

“I appreciate all your arguments,” replied Ingleton, “and in a way I am convinced that you are right. But I can’t bring myself to stand idly by while knowing that she is in danger. No, it is useless for you to plead with me. My mind is fully made up, and I am going to the island with you, or else I go there alone.”

Seeing the futility of further argument, Redmond dropped the entire matter and began to make his own arrangements for the trip to Patrocínio Island. He got into communication with Captain Moore and discussed with him the details of the arrangements between them that were to be carried out after Redmond had been landed on the island.

It was agreed that Redmond should be at the cove each evening at nine o’clock and that he would rig up his portable wireless set and call

the cruiser with it until he got a response. This would only be done in case he had a message of importance to deliver. Each evening at nine o'clock the cruiser would steam within five miles of the island. At all other times she would be just below the horizon but within a convenient radius.

As soon as the details of the trip had been completed the cruiser Farragut left Honolulu with Redmond and Arthur Ingleton aboard as passengers. It was decided to proceed to Patrocinio Island at cruising speed, and it was estimated that the voyage would take about three days. It was timed so that the cruiser should arrive off the southern shores of the island after sunset. Captain Moore was then to take his vessel within a mile of the beach, and a detachment from his crew in a long boat would row Redmond and Ingleton ashore in a small light boat and give them assistance in hiding the small boat in the vegetation ashore, after which the crew would return to the cruiser. As soon as the two men had landed they were to proceed to the little cave where Redmond had lived during the period he was on the island and spend the night there. The following morning they were to go to the meeting place at the rock where Redmond had always met Mary Ingleton and wait there for a possible chance of getting her attention again.

At five o'clock on the evening of the third day out from Honolulu the engines of the cruiser Farragut suddenly slowed down and in a few minutes stopped altogether. Redmond who was

walking along the quarterdeck with Arthur Ingleton immediately turned to his companion and said:

“Well, I guess we are almost within sight of our destination. The engines have just stopped, and I imagine that means Captain Moore is going to wait for sundown before he proceeds any further.”

Ingleton's face lit up with a greater animation than he had displayed in months.

“Let's go forward and see whether we can make the island out,” he said eagerly.

Redmond assented to this, and the two made their way forward into the sharp bows of the cruiser. After they got there both men strained their eyes at the horizon. A few moments later Redmond, who had picked up a pair of glasses, said:

“I can just see the island faintly. If you look through these glasses, sir, you will observe what looks like a small cloud directly to the north of us. That's it.”

Ingleton took the proffered glasses and peered through them intently. While he looked Redmond said:

“I'll go aft and ask Captain Moore what his plans are. I guess he will land us immediately after sundown, which will be in another hour's time. We'll probably have dinner before he puts us ashore. I'll be back shortly if you want to remain here.”

“Alright,” replied Ingleton, “I think I'll remain here for a while. I am anxious to see

what the island looks like as we get nearer to it before dark.”

Redmond turned round and went aft, leaving his companion standing on the quarter deck. The cruiser still had considerable way on and was moving through the water at about ten knots an hour. No effort had been made to check the vessel's momentum, after the engines had been stopped. Captain Moore had simply signalled down to stop the engines and was now allowing the headway to carry his vessel forward.

In less than an hour the blazing sun would disappear below the western horizon, and then night would descend over the sea with the suddenness known only in tropical regions. As soon as darkness had cast its obliterating mantle about them, Captain Moore planned to run his vessel within a mile of the beach, which was now within sight through the marine glasses. After that he would land his passengers.

As Redmond reached the companion-way leading to the bridge the roaring crash of a mighty explosion rent the stillness of the summery sea and arrested his progress. For one fleeting second a blinding flash eclipsed the brilliance of the sun and illuminated the forward part of the ship in its consuming rays. Pausing involuntarily upon the stairway, Redmond looked toward the bows of the cruiser. As he turned the vessel shook violently from stem to stern in a sickening, vicious vibration, which seemed to wrench it plate from plate. It was as though

some volcanic agency had seized it in a destroying grip and was rending it apart.

Stupefied by the very suddenness of the catastrophe, Redmond could not remove his eyes from the deck before him. Automatically they recorded upon his active brain a moving picture of the vivid scene that was enacted within the brief measured space of two seconds. As he looked he saw the figure of the former Secretary of the Navy outlined in sharp contrast by the blinding rays of the flash which accompanied the explosion. Then, before he could draw a breath, he saw Ingleton's arms shoot upwards involuntarily. He saw the figure of the man he had just left sway unsteadily for a moment and then crash helplessly to the deck. Then suddenly the spell that had held him in frozen immobility ended, and he rushed forward blindly, to the man he had just seen fall.

For a few moments chaos reigned upon the war-vessel. Upon the bridge Captain Moore had been struck in the arm by a piece of flying metal and painfully injured. Ignoring this, he remained at his post, and with trained calmness of a naval officer and leader, quietly ordered the bugler to sound the call "Collision quarters." Like magic the discipline of the navy exerted itself and quickly brought order out of the chaos. Rapidly and steadily each man went to his station, while officers who were detailed by the commander went forward to ascertain the cause and effect of the explosion.

Before they had received their orders, however, Redmond had reached the bows of the ship and was bending over the prostrate form of Arthur Ingleton. He raised the head of the former naval chief in his arms and did the best he could to restore consciousness. While he worked, the ship's surgeon arrived and quickly examined the injured man. Redmond watched him a few moments and then said:

"Is he badly hurt, Sir?"

"So far as I can see," replied the medical officer, "he has not been seriously injured. He was knocked unconscious by the shock of the explosion. That in itself is pretty bad and will take a long time for recovery, but I don't think he has got any broken bones or internal injuries. It's too soon to tell though. I'll have him removed to the sick bay right away."

While this was being done the officers who had been examining the bows of the cruiser to find out the nature and extent of the damage completed their task and returned to the bridge where they reported the result of their examination to the captain.

"It looks as though we had struck a mine, sir, there's a big hole in the bows," the senior officer reported.

"It must be one of that pirate's mines," exclaimed the captain. Then he cried: "Where's the bo's'n? Send him here."

"Here, sir!" replied the bo's'n, saluting as he came upon the bridge.

“Have you taken any soundings for’ard?” asked Captain Moore.

“Yes, sir!” answered the bo’s’n.

“What do you find?”

“Number one compartment is flooded, sir. Water is pouring into number two, but we can’t find at what rate yet.”

“Will she stand up?” queried the captain sharply.

“Don’t know yet, sir. The men are taking soundings again now. We are watching number three. The water’s pouring in very rapidly, and she’s down by the head.”

“Alright,” added the captain, “report back to me as soon as you find out at what rate it’s coming in.”

Then turning to the chief executive officer, he ordered:

“Put out the lifeboats and have the crew stand by. Order the fires shut off down below. Have everything in readiness in case she shows signs of going down, and wait for further orders, in case we have to abandon ship.”

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

The day after Levanter had showed her through his manufacturing plant dawned fraught with grave possibilities for Mary. It was the day set for laying the mine bombs in the sea on the western side of the island. Now or never was her chance! She was to get a first hand demonstration in the manner of handling the bombs; and after that she must carry out her dangerous plan immediately, as the repairs to the airplane were now completed, and there was no telling when Levanter might stroll over to the beach near the Hilo and discover that the lifeboat was missing. True he did not go in that direction often, but there was no way of knowing how soon he might.

As soon as she was dressed Mary went down to the dining room that had been built in the house where they all lived. Levanter and his crew were all seated at the table, eating the breakfast that had been prepared by the Kanaoka cook of the schooner. As she sat down the sky pirate said to her:

"We are going to set out immediately after breakfast, Mary. Will you be ready then?"

"Yes," she replied.

She was far too excited to eat much, although she made an ostensible effort to do so, as she did not wish the men in front of her to suspect that her feelings were anything but normal. Immediately after the meal, the men went outside and began to load the bombs which had been completed on the airplane. Mary went out with them. She noted that they had carefully observed whether the safety lock was in before picking up the dangerous things. There were too many to carry on one trip, and it was decided to make two voyages to the place where they were to be submerged.

When the task of loading the bombs on the airplane had been completed Mary went aboard with Levanter and the rest of the crew. The airplane was released from its mooring to the ringbolt on the jutting rock, and the marine screw was started. It took about an hour to make the voyage to the destination because the airplane, although only of shallow draft, was compelled to cruise well within the mine belt and go slowly. Its retractible wings were drawn up close to the side of the fuselage cabin. Only in the harbor itself had sufficient room been left free from mines for the airplane to land upon and take off from the water.

Once arrived at the scene of the mine laying, Mary watched the operations with extreme interest. A number of heavy rocks had been brought along in the airplane, one for each bomb. While the airplane was cruising to the

place where they were to be lowered into the sea, the crew was engaged in splicing ropes to the rocks. The rocks were to act as anchors to the bombs. As soon as a rope was spliced on to a rock, the other end of the rope was attached to the bomb, the length of the rope being just sufficient to keep the mine submerged.

Immediately after the airplane arrived at its destination its wings were again extended and were used as a platform from which to drop the bombs into the sea. Levanter had made a careful survey of the island and had drawn a chart of it and the waters surrounding it. A pin point on this chart marked the exact location of each bomb that had been previously dropped into the sea.

At the point where he desired to sow the remaining mines the airplane was brought to a stop, and the crew went out on the wings. One of the rocks with its rope attached was dropped overboard. At the other end of the rope the mine was attached, and as soon as the rope became taut the mine was carefully dropped overboard, after the safety lock had been released.

Mary watched these operations carefully and intently. Occasionally she asked Levanter a question, which in every case he did not hesitate to answer. She had now gained a complete knowledge of the manner in which the bombs were handled safely, and she was convinced that she herself could handle them without danger.

While the men were still engaged in their

work, Mary was deeply engrossed in the problem of detonating one of the bombs, should she be successful in obtaining one and placing it under the schooner Hilo. It was evident that she could not change the mechanism of the bomb herself, therefore, she must devise some other means of exploding it from a point of safety, after placing it beneath the schooner.

She was still deep in this reverie when Levanter and his men had completed their job. She was brought back to realities by the former who tapped her on the shoulder and said:

"Mary, I am going to say something personal. I hope you won't misunderstand me. I am not saying it to insult you because I know what I am going to tell you is my fault and not yours."

"What is it?" asked Mary somewhat sharply.

"It's a pretty difficult and delicate thing to say," he replied, "but I couldn't help noticing as you stood there how much you are in need of some new clothes. Your wardrobe must be nearly exhausted."

"Well, you can't expect me to keep in the height of fashion on your island, can you?" said Mary with asperity. "The stores here are not exactly in the same class with those on Fifth Avenue."

"I didn't mean to be rude, Mary," said Levanter, "the fault is mine, I know. What I wanted to tell you was that I am going out to get you some new clothes. The airplane is in good repair again, and as soon as we get this

job done I will go out and get you something new."

Mary was now all attention. His remark had aroused all the feminine interest and instincts within her. How did he propose to get new clothes for her? She had been dissatisfied with her appearance but had become reconciled to it, especially as there were no other women on the island. His remark opened up a number of possibilities. Was he going to take her with him, if so, where? This might offer a chance to escape from him. Quickly she decided to press him on that point and find out just exactly what his intentions were.

"You don't suppose that you can buy clothes that will suit me, do you?" she asked.

"Well, no," he replied, "I didn't intend to buy them. I was going to get them from my next airship. I thought you could come along and pick out what you wanted."

The answer was a distinct disappointment to Mary.

"Do you think I want to wear some other woman's clothes?" she exclaimed indignantly.

"Why not, Mary," inquired Levanter. "There is no other way to get them. We can't take you to any store to buy you new ones, and even if we could, the stores we could take you to are so inferior that you would undoubtedly get better looking clothes from one of the airships than you would from any of the stores in the Pacific Islands. Women who can afford to

travel on the airships can afford to have good and stylish clothes, and you can have the best there is on the airship just for the taking."

"Oh; if that's the case I'm not interested," said Mary with an air of finality. "The clothes I have are good enough for me under those circumstances."

"But, my dear girl, what you have will soon be in rags; you can't expect them to last forever. Besides I like to see you looking nice."

"Well I can sew them if they become ragged," she replied, "I am not going to put anybody in danger for the sake of new clothes."

"I am going anyway, so you might as well have the best we can get for you," said Levanter.

"You may do as you please, but I am not going with you."

Mary refused to discuss the matter any further, and Levanter did not insist. She dismissed the subject from her mind. On the way back to the harbor she became deeply engrossed again in the problem of obtaining one of the bombs. Having decided upon what she thought was the best way to do this, she tackled the next problem confronting her. How could she arrange for its explosion after she had placed it under the schooner and had herself reached a place of safety?

She had no knowledge of mechanics, and she racked her brain for some means of accomplish-

ing her purpose without danger to herself. Finally, after thinking over it for a long time, an idea occurred to her which she thought might help her.

She could employ a trick she had seen the boys use in snaring birds, while she was a little girl. If she could get a heavy rock, poise it above one of the contact studs of the bomb by means of a stick, and then attach a string to it, she could pull the string and let the rock fall on the contact. She felt sure that it would fall with sufficient force to explode the bomb, blow up the schooner, and destroy all evidence that the lifeboat was missing. It was the best solution of the difficulty that she could think of. The problem now confronting her was to obtain one of the bombs.

As the airplane neared the harbor Mary's mind reverted to the subject of clothes that had just been broached by Levanter. After all he was apparently determined to go out again and bring down another airship, and nothing that she could do or say would prevent him from carrying out his purpose, short of a direct promise to marry him, and she had no intention of giving him that. Here indeed was a chance to put her plan into effect while he was away. She felt sure that on the morning of his departure he would ask her to accompany him. She decided to feign illness as a pretext for not going. Then after he had left in the airplane she would try to get one of the bombs from the workshop

and endeavor to complete her task before he returned. She figured that he would be away fully six hours and probably longer. This would give her ample time to do what she wanted, provided the Kanakas kept out of the way. So far as she could see the latter was the only thing that would stop her.

When the airplane reached the harbor the crew got busy loading up the remaining mines that were to be dropped on the western side of the island. Mary went off the machine with Levanter and shortly after said to him:

"I don't feel like going out with you again this afternoon. I think I'll remain here while you go out. I want to read."

"Alright," he replied.

In the afternoon Mary waited until Levanter and his men went down to the airplane, then she strolled over to the beach and examined the Hilo very carefully. She looked for the best place to put the bomb. Then she searched for a rock heavy enough to fall with sufficient force to explode the bomb. Having found one, she decided it would be a good idea to save a lot of time by moving it into position right away.

For the rest of the afternoon Mary worked feverishly and laboriously, moving the rock over toward the schooner Hilo with the aid of a big stick she used as a lever. With great patience and persistent effort she succeeded in getting it alongside the wrecked schooner. Her task completed, she paused, almost exhausted from the

exertion. So violent had been her struggle in moving the heavy rock that perspiration was running freely down her face, and her breath was coming in deep heavy gasps. Still panting, she straightened herself up and looked around. At that moment she got the greatest shock of her life.

Standing directly behind her, was Levanter with a sardonic smile upon his face.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Upon the shattered decks of the cruiser Faragut order had scarcely been established out of the chaos that followed the explosion when the sun descended below the western horizon. Two minutes later complete darkness enshrouded the torn bows of the cruiser in a pall of obscurity, obliterating from view the effects of the violent explosion.

Order reigned, but it was a tradition-enforced order that existed on the surface of subdued but intense excitement. The men were at their stations, all standing at attention, awaiting with ill-concealed anxiety the next command that would move them into welcome action. Through the mind of every one there passed disturbing thoughts. None knew which comrade had perished in the catastrophe, and none dared voice the fears which the darkness intensified.

So close was the damaged cruiser to the shores of Patrocinio Island that Captain Moore did not dare to show a light. He feared the terrific report which followed the explosion had betrayed his presence, and might seriously endanger him should the pirate come out at daybreak.

The darkness that now engulfed them made the task of ascertaining the extent of the damage almost impossible.

In the short time that intervened between the explosion and the sun's descent the cruiser's bows had presented a picture of torn and twisted steel, which in some places had been stripped into metal ribbons, and in others had been torn into crumpled sheets. How far the crippled stem of the warship had been rent asunder it was impossible to say owing to the darkness. That it had been seriously damaged was emphasized by the complete flooding of the forward compartment. The cruiser was also badly down by the head, which gave a considerable slant to the decks. That was the condition which confronted Captain Moore when the bo's'n came upon the bridge the second time to make his report.

"How's it look?" asked the captain curtly.

"Number three is holding tight, sir," replied the bo's'n. "The pumps are working on number two. I think she will hold up, sir. We've got her under control now, sir, I think."

"Good!" exclaimed the captain. "Keep at your soundings and let me know what they show."

"Aye, aye, sir," answered the bo's'n, as he went about his task.

Then the captain turned to an officer beside him and issued a number of commands calculated to take care of the desperate situation. He ordered the crew away from their "abandon

ship'' stations and set them to work at various tasks that were necessary under the circumstances.

As soon as it had been ascertained that the ship was not in any immediate danger of sinking, the surgeon obtained a detail of men and superintended them while they carefully placed the unconscious form of Arthur Ingleton on a stretcher and carried him below to the sick bay, where he was placed on a cot. There the surgeon made a more thorough examination of the injured man and took the necessary steps to restore him to consciousness. Redmond, who had helped in removing the stricken man from the bows of the ship to the sick bay, was waiting for the surgeon to complete his examination. As soon as it was over he asked anxiously:

“How is he, doctor?”

“Well, he is in a more serious condition than I thought at first,” was the reply.

“Then there’s no chance of his recovering in time to go ashore with me, eh!” inquired Redmond.

“Good God, no,” answered the surgeon, “it will probably be three weeks or a month before he recovers under the most favorable circumstances. If he has suffered internal injuries it will take much longer. Everything depends upon that.”

Redmond said nothing further, but in his heart he was glad that Ingleton would not be able to go with him, although of course he was

deeply sorry that his injuries had proved to be so serious. As soon as he had definitely assured himself that there was no chance of the former secretary's immediate recovery, Redmond went forward.

Captain Moore was still on the bridge, receiving reports and giving orders for the tasks that would help in keeping the damaged vessel afloat. Redmond waited for his opportunity, then went up and asked:

"How does it look, captain, is there any chance of my going ashore tonight?"

"Yes," replied the commander, "we'll take care of you pretty soon now. We've got the situation under control, but I think we're pretty badly damaged. As soon as I have found out just where we stand I'll make arrangements to put you ashore. How is Mr. Ingleton?"

"He's in pretty bad shape. The doctor says there isn't any possibility of his getting out of bed for a few weeks. Under the circumstances I think it will be the wisest thing for me to go ashore and look after Miss Ingleton as soon as you can arrange to get me there. While you are completing your emergency measures I'll get my own stuff ready."

"Alright," replied the captain.

Redmond went down to his cabin in the after quarters of the cruiser and packed up the few belongings he had gathered to take ashore with him. For half an hour afterwards Captain Moore directed the work of investigation and

superintended the emergency measures taken to keep the cruiser afloat until she could again reach port. This was a most vital problem because the nearest port at which repairs could be made was Honolulu, more than fifteen hundred miles away. It meant that any temporary measures had to be relied upon to hold up the cruiser until she was able to cover that vast distance at the snail's pace of about four knots an hour. It would be impossible for the war vessel with its damaged bows to go any faster than that.

As soon as he had satisfied himself that everything possible had been done under the circumstances, Captain Moore summoned Redmond to the bridge again.

"Everything's ready for you now," said the captain as Redmond came up to the bridge, "we are going to put you ashore right away. Owing to this confounded explosion we will not be able to stay here and stand by you. I am going to advise Captain Smith at Honolulu by wireless and ask him to send another cruiser here. It will take the other fellow at least three days to get here, even if he is ready to start off immediately after Captain Smith gets my wireless. I doubt, however, whether there is a cruiser available, and even if there is it will probably be a couple of days before he can get away. That would make it four days before the other cruiser could get here under most favorable circumstances."

"I'll have to make the best I can of the situation," said Redmond.

While this conversation was going on, a detail of the crew had launched one of the steam pinnaces and had attached one of the ship's gigs to it as a tow. As soon as this had been done, the officer who had been in charge of the detail came on to the bridge and, saluting, said to the Captain:

"All's ready, sir."

Captain Moore turned to Redmond and, seizing his hand in a hearty grip, said:

"Well, good bye, Redmond, and good luck. I'm sorry this mine has put me out of business, because I wanted to be in at the finish, but I guess I'm out o' luck."

"Good bye, Captain," replied Redmond. "Somehow I have an idea that you will be in at the finish all right. You were there at the beginning and I have a suspicion you will be here again."

"Well, I hope you're right," laughed the captain.

Redmond then followed the officer to the accommodation ladder on the side of the cruiser. The two men got into the steam launch, and the officer gave the word to "shove off."

On the short run to the beach the officer said to Redmond:

"When we get to the cove my men will give you a hand in putting the boat ashore. I guess you don't want it any further inshore than is

necessary. How do you propose to launch it from the beach in case of necessity."

"Well, if you can spare the time," said Redmond, "you can come ashore with me and look the place over for the most suitable spot to hide the boat. I never thought of any launching arrangement before. Have you by any chance got any wooden rollers in the launch that I could use under the keel of the boat?"

"Yes, I thought of that," replied the officer, "and I put a few of them aboard the launch. You can have them, that's what I brought them for, but even so it will be a pretty stiff job for you to push the boat into the sea anyway, especially if anybody is after you."

"If anybody were after me," said Redmond, "I wouldn't attempt to launch it. I would take a chance of remaining on the island and fighting the pirate from the bushes. I'm armed now and have got a better chance against him. Under any circumstances Miss Ingleton will be able to give me a hand. She is a pretty strong young woman."

The trip in the launch to the little bay was made very slowly because of the intense darkness. With extreme care the officer in charge felt his way, then manœuvred his craft under the direction of Redmond until it pulled up alongside a ledge of rock that jutted out into the sea. This made an ideal platform upon which to land, as its surface was just above the gun'les of the launch. Redmond and the officer jumped out,

and the latter instructed three of his men to row the small gig to the beach, pull it ashore and wait for them there.

While the men were doing this, Redmond and his companion walked near the beach where the boat could be hidden in the brush. The beach was of a gravel nature which extended inshore for two or three hundred yards in an irregular line. Back of this the tropical vegetation was extremely thick and was interspersed with banana plants and cocoanut palms.

After a considerable search the two men succeeded in locating what they thought was an excellent place to hide the boat. Then they went down to the beach where the men had dragged the boat ashore and gave a hand in pulling it over the ground to the place where they had selected its hiding place. There they carefully placed it in the bushes, after which they removed with care all traces of the boat's passage over the beach.

"Well, I guess we'll go back now," said the officer, "is there anything else we can do to help you?"

"No," replied Redmond.

"Alright, we'll get along then. I wish you the best of luck, old man, and I can tell you we are all sorry that we won't be able to stand by you. We were all set to have a go at that dirty son-of-a-gun the pirate, but we're out o' luck, that's all. Good-bye—good luck!"

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

For several moment after the naval crew had left him on the shores of the little cove at the southern end of Patrocinio Island Redmond paused deep in thought. He was confronted with a very confusing dilemma. Should he remain where he was for the rest of the evening and take a nap in the bushes surrounding the cove, or should he try to make his way in the darkness to the cave where he had lived during his previous stay on the island?

If he went forward in the dark, he mused, there was always the possibility that he might stumble over something and betray his presence. On the other hand, with nothing but vegetation to hide in where he was, he might easily be discovered in the morning, should any of the pirate gang happen to come over to that side of the island.

After weighing the matter carefully in his mind, he decided to stay where he was. He figured this would entail the least risk, and moreover, he was anxious to inspect the place where the boat was hidden, during daylight, so that he would be more familiar with it, in case of need.

Having reached this decision, he searched around for a suitable spot to sleep in, and having found it, threw himself down and slept soundly for the rest of the night.

As daylight burst in on the tropical sky the following morning, Redmond awoke, bright and alert. He ran over to where a small brook was trickling its way into the bay and took a hurried wash. Then, after a meal of bananas plucked from the plants around him, he made a brief examination of the hiding place where the row boat was stowed away. No better place could have been chosen even in daylight. It lay alongside a small bumpy piece of ground not more than a hundred yards from the sea, and it was completely hidden from view by vegetation. There was not a single mark on the beach to show where it had been pulled from the water over to its hiding place. In the boat was the small compact wireless set which would be a link between himself and the cruiser in case of emergency. It was of the reflected wave type, operating on a wavelelength of half a meter. It could be conveniently held in the hand, and yet it could easily carry his voice for a distance of twenty-five miles in a straight line. This remarkable efficiency was due to the fact that instead of radiating in every direction, the electromagnetic waves were reflected in the same manner that a beam of light is reflected from a mirror. The set was so designed that it could be used for transmission and reception, thus making

it possible to conduct a conversation with it. The power required was supplied by a single dry cell, and a small high voltage battery. It was a development of the system first produced by Guglielmo Marconi, the inventor of wireless, and his assistants in 1922. Satisfied that the boat would escape detection and yet be easily moved into the sea in case of need, he started his journey into the interior of the island, where his old cave was located. His progress was necessarily slow because of the density of the tropical vegetation which covered the island in an almost solid patch. After trudging for a little more than an hour, he finally reached the cave that had been his home for so many nights. Everything was practically as he had left it.

Redmond had brought with him a few necessities, which he figured would make his stay at the cave more endurable, and these he proceeded to stow away carefully where they could not be seen in case any of the outlaws should happen to pass that way. Among the things he brought with him was an automatic pistol, a very small revolver, and a short range rifle equipped with a silencer. After he had hidden his small camp equipment, he threw himself down within the shade of the cave for a brief nap during the heat of the midday sun.

The afternoon was well advanced when he awoke again. Hurriedly he gathered a meal from the growths around him and washed it down

with copious draughts from the brook that passed around the hill in which the cave was located. This done, he set out on his journey to the rock where he had been in the habit of meeting Mary Ingleton during his previous stay on the island. With him he took the rifle for use in any emergency that might arise. In his pocket he had placed the small revolver. This he intended to give to Mary at the first opportunity as a means of protection for herself.

He moved forward cautiously. It was now a long time since he had last trodden the path and he was not absolutely sure of himself, and the trail he had broken was covered completely over with thick growth. Another reason that impelled him to caution was the fact that he did not know what changes might have taken place at the pirate's end of the island. As he went forward he realized that he was confronted with the most hazardous part of his trip, and as he walked with difficulty through the jungle two concurrent but unconnected thoughts passed through his alert mind. Almost subconsciously one thought was concentrated upon the task before him of getting to the rock safely without detection. It was engendered by his fixity of purpose and developed by the quick observation of his eyes and the keen perception of his ears.

Coincident with this thought was another and more intimate one which proceeded from his reasoning faculties. It was caused by his anxiety over the safety of the young woman he had

come to assist, but its continuation was due to an entirely different reason.

It was several weeks since he had last seen Mary Ingleton, and many things had happened to him during that period. Now that he was approaching the critical part of his adventure he wondered how she had fared while he had been in Honolulu and she was on the island at the mercy of the pirate and his crew with no one to encourage or protect her.

As he thought his mind reverted back to the time when he had set out from the island in the frail boat to reach civilization and bring aid to Mary. At that time, he mused, he was actuated by purely altruistic and chivalrous motives. The series of remarkable adventures he had undergone and the suffering he had experienced, however, had caused him many moments of serious introspection during that time, and now he knew that an entirely different cause motivated his present efforts.

There was no doubt about it. His former indifference toward the weaker sex had entirely disappeared, and in its place a new feeling had been engendered within him. With the calculating calmness that was one of his chief characteristics he had analyzed carefully day by day the new sensation, and after a long deliberation he had come to a conclusion as unexpected as his cogitation had been lengthy. He realized and admitted to himself that he was in love with the young woman he was now on his way to aid.

Strangely enough the realization brought him no feeling of happiness. Instead his mind was sorely troubled. It was beclouded with depressing thoughts concerning Mary and gloomy conjectures regarding her safety. Under any other circumstances he would have pushed forward to assist her with only the thought of getting to the scene of her involuntary imprisonment at the earliest possible moment. Now, however, a series of wild conjectures as to what might have happened to her during his absence coursed through his mind in rapid succession to torture him. He imagined all kinds of gruesome things, and even though he carefully argued that all of them were impossible, nevertheless he could not entirely cast the gloomy ideas from his mind.

Thus, alternately rising to the heights of hope and then falling into the depths of despair, he trudged slowly forward through the jungle until he reached its edge. Then he looked out over the clearing where the pirate had established his base. In the foreground was the rock where he had met Mary so many times before. Not a sign could he see of any of the outlaw gang upon the shores, or near the buildings where they lived and worked, nor was Mary to be seen anywhere.

He was disappointed. Having assured himself that no one was in sight, he cautiously emerged from the shelter of the vegetation about him, and then made his way slowly and carefully to the rock. It was his intention to stay

there as long as it was daylight, on the chance of attracting Mary's attention, should she come out of the building. If unsuccessful in this he had decided to come back each day until he had finally seen and spoken to her. He was anxious to complete the plans for her escape as soon as possible, despite the fact that it would be a few days before another cruiser could possibly arrive from Honolulu and take the place of the damaged Farragut.

He reached the rock in safety and then lay down beside it. He made himself as comfortable as he could under the circumstances. In this condition he was hidden in such a manner that he could look around the base of the rock and get a clear view of the pirate's base before him without being visible himself.

As he looked over the harbor he saw the remarkable airplane of the pirate afloat near the rock to which it was moored. He concluded that Levanter and his crew must be upon the island. His reasoning was apparently confirmed by the small wisp of bluish smoke which was idly rising out of the small stack in the workshop building where the liquid oxygen fuel was made by Levanter's men.

It seemed as though he had been lying there for years before anything happened. In reality a little more than an hour had elapsed from the time he took his position behind the rock until he saw two figures emerge from the larger building. As they moved about he recognized in them

Levanter and Mary. Instinctively he gripped his rifle. He brought it to his shoulder as he lay, ready at a moment's notice to aim and fire. His natural caution however warned him against any hasty action that might jeopardize the chances of rescuing Mary, especially as it would be several days before he could get her off the island under any conditions.

Silently and intently he watched the two figures. They appeared to be engaged in a very excited conversation, judging from their animated gesticulations. As they spoke to one another they were gradually walking to the landing place where the airplane lay at its moorings. Occasionally Mary would stop, and Levanter would turn toward her and apparently argue with a great show of eagerness before they began to move on again.

Suddenly Redmond set himself in tense but subdued alertness. His quick eye had detected a decided change in the situation when Mary had stopped once more. He distinctly saw her stamp her foot, apparently in anger, turn completely around and then start back in the direction whence she and Levanter had come. As she did so he saw the latter leap forward and grasp Mary by the shoulder. He saw the pirate stop Mary abruptly by the strength of his grip and shake her visibly. The scene he witnessed completely severed the restraining grip of caution that had held him motionless. He was inwardly boiling with an all consuming rage en-

gendered by the scene that was being enacted before him upon the beach, and under the sour of its intensity he raised his rifle to his shoulder and fired. The bullet sped silently and true. Redmond saw Levanter's grip loosen from Mary's shoulder. He saw the pirate reel unsteadily for a second, then fall in a huddled heap upon the ground.

CHAPTER THIRTY

For three days after her crew had placed Redmond on the shores of Patrocinio Island, the damaged cruiser "Farragut" limped steadily forward at the rate of twelve knots an hour toward Honolulu. Hers was probably one of the most forlorn voyages ever undertaken. When she left Honolulu every man on board was keyed up to the pitch of expectation, proud and eager to be in at the finish of the pirate whose depredations had aroused the entire world. Now their ship was slinking back to port in a crippled condition, rendered impotent by one of the defensive weapons of the pirate they had hoped to capture.

Immediately after Redmond had been placed ashore the crew of the "Farragut" stretched a tarpaulin around the shattered bows of their vessel to break the force of the water. Other temporary repairs were also made. Fortunately, the bulkhead between the second and third hold, which had not been damaged by the explosion, was still watertight and sufficiently strong to enable the ship to proceed at the reduced speed.

Realizing the desperate nature of the voyage

before him, Captain Moore took the shortest possible course to his destination, and although it practically paralleled the regular trade route between Honolulu and Midway Island, not a single object was sighted to relieve the monotonous sameness of the vast sea throughout the dreary time that had elapsed since the return trip began. Several times the war-vessel had been very close to the various uninhabited rocks belonging to the Hawaiian archipelago, but none had been sighted. In fact, no effort had been made to approach them.

Early on the fourth day of the voyage, when sun observations showed the "Farragut" was approaching the elongated island of Niihau, Captain Moore sent instructions forward to the men on duty to keep a sharp watch for sight of land. This order had scarcely been issued when the look-out man in the fighting top of the foremast sang out to the bridge:

"There's a ship about two points on the port bow, sir."

Captain Moore was in the navigating room at the time. He immediately gave orders to the quartermaster, who promptly threw his helm over, so that the "Farragut" would approach the other ship. Within half an hour the two vessels were close enough to permit semaphore signalling to one another. Before that time, however, it was clearly evident that the stranger was a war-vessel of the fast light cruiser type.

Having ascertained the nature of the stranger, Captain Moore naturally surmised that she was on her way to take his place off Patrocinio Island, in response to the emergency message he had sent shortly after the explosion had damaged the bows of his ship.

In her subsequent signals the approaching cruiser said she was the "New Orleans", under instructions to proceed to Patrocinio, and intercept the "Farragut" on the way. Her commander then added that he had orders for Captain Moore and asked the latter to come to in order that he could deliver them.

This was done immediately, and shortly afterwards a small launch was lowered from the "New Orleans", which then started over toward the "Farragut." When the launch came alongside the damaged cruiser Captain Simmons of the "New Orleans" came aboard and went into the navigating cabin. There, after customary greetings had been exchanged with Captain Moore, Simmons said:

"I have instructions for you from headquarters at Honolulu. Here they are."

He then handed Captain Moore a sealed envelope and continued:

"As I understand it, we are to change commands and you are to take the "New Orleans" on to Patrocinio and carry out your original instructions."

Captain Moore took the message and hurriedly read it. It confirmed, in regulation navy form,

what Captain Simmons had just said. The two officers then went through the necessary formalities of transferring their commands. As soon as this had been completed they engaged in conversation for a few moments, during which Moore gave his colleague an outline of the explosion and the events that followed it.

"How is Mr. Ingleton now?" asked Captain Simmons.

"He's improving wonderfully," replied Captain Moore. "At first the doctor was afraid he had suffered internal injuries, but I understand that such is not the case. He is still laid up, suffering from the effects of the shock, but he is expected to recover pretty rapidly now, I believe."

"Well, I'm glad to hear that. Was he disappointed at not being able to go ashore with Redmond to aid his daughter?"

"We haven't discussed that situation with him at all. The doctor has asked us not to do so, and I think it would be a wise idea not to mention it to him. In fact, if I were you, I would not visit him at all because if he saw there had been a change of commanders he might suspect something and begin worrying. So far as I am aware, he is still under the impression that we are lying off Patrocinio. He can't feel the ship's vibration where he is lying. It will be best to let him recover first and then explain the turn of events to him afterwards."

For the next few moments the conversation

dwelt upon naval matters generally, in the course of which Captain Moore asked:

“What’s the latest in connection with operations against the pirate? Have any new plans been decided upon?”

“No! So far as I know, there is no change in the situation, except that I heard the experts in Washington have cabled that they have been successful in developing a new kind of bomb and shell that is to be used against him when everything is ready for the final operations.”

“What’s the nature of it?” inquired Moore.

“I don’t know exactly. I understand that it is a chemical bomb containing some liquid gas, probably something like those Levanter is reported to be using.”

“We haven’t heard a thing during the time we have been coming from the island,” said Captain Moore, “so we have been wondering whether anything unusual had happened, or whether the pirate had been out from his base at all.”

“There is nothing new,” replied Captain Simmons. “The pirate has been inactive ever since you left Honolulu. I imagine that he is undergoing periodical repairs. He is undoubtedly having great difficulty in obtaining the supplies he needs for his engines. The private companies are not taking any chances, and most schedules have been completely abandoned until there is a greater measure of security against him. Of course, I don’t know anything about

the plans that are being made, but I have an idea that it won't be very long now before a concentrated attack is made against the pirate. I know all kinds of pressure is being brought to bear on the government to move against him, and everybody is keyed up. You are a lucky dog. You'll probably be right on the job when things are moving."

"Well, I hope they move quickly," said Moore, "it's no cinch lying around off that God-forsaken place waiting for something to happen and not knowing anything. It can't come too quick to suit me."

"Well, I wish you luck anyway," said Simmons as Moore rose to leave. A few minutes afterwards the latter was in the launch on his way to take over his new command and proceed back to the pirate's nest.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

When Levanter fell with a bullet from Redmond's silent rifle through his leg, Mary Ingleton gained a respite from the most trying ordeal of her life. As it happened, Redmond's return to Patrocinio Island occurred the evening before the pirate had taken Mary on the mine laying trip, and the former officer of the Wilbur Wright was actually making his way across the island from his cave to the old meeting place when Levanter surprised Mary beside the schooner Hilo. A lifetime of emotion had been concentrated for her in the brief hour which intervened between the two incidents.

At the moment when, flushed and worn out from the tremendous effort she had made in rolling the rock alongside the wrecked schooner, Mary looked up and saw her captor before her the surprise sent her heart into violent palpitation. For several seconds—a seeming eternity—she stood in open mouthed astonishment, speechless and helpless. The pirate watched her unfeigned amazement while he endeavored to guess the reason for her exertions. Finally he broke the tensivity of the situation by exclaiming:

“What are you trying to do, Mary?”

His question brought Mary out of her stupor, back to her normal self.

“Good Heavens,” she gasped, “you startled me terribly. How did you get here?”

“I’m sorry,” replied Levanter, with a cynical smile. “I didn’t mean to frighten you, dearest. I changed my mind at the last moment and didn’t go out with the men. I sent Johnson out to superintend the mine laying job and then I came back. I saw you come out here and I just naturally followed you.”

The term of endearment used for the first time by Levanter since her imprisonment on the island brought a flush to Mary’s cheeks. It was not caused by any feeling of embarrassment. In fact the mingled feelings which had gripped her following his sudden appearance were completely consumed now in the molten heat of her violent hatred for the man before her. The flush was one of anger. The sky pirate on the other hand misinterpreted it entirely. The appearance of the blush on Mary’s face as he addressed her endearingly, caused him to forget momentarily the suspicions her actions had engendered within his mind.

Mary’s anger had now overcome her fear and to a certain extent subjected her judgement. Turning to Levanter, she exclaimed with considerable emphasis:

“I think you are terribly mean to scare me

like that. I didn't think you were prowling after me and spying on me."

The remark brought Levanter out of the realm of speculation back to realities and his suspicions.

"But I can't understand what on earth you were doing pushing that big, heavy rock about," he said.

"Oh, I was just exercising," said Mary sarcastically, still angry.

Levantier left her and went over to the wrecked schooner. He began to examine it carefully, particularly where Mary had rolled the rock up alongside it. Despite his careful search, he could find nothing wrong, and the failure left him still further perplexed as to her motives. What was her object in struggling so persistently with the rock, he reflected? It certainly was not for the purpose of exercise, because there were many more pleasant ways in which she could have done that. No! There was some real reason for it, and he made up his mind to find out what it was.

After making a complete search around the schooner, he clambered aboard the wreck and carried his investigation further. He went through the battered hull, from stem to stern, picking his way slowly and carefully through the piled up debris. Everything about the old schooner was as natural and normal as could be under the circumstances, considering the length of time it had lain upon the beach, sub-

ject to the constant pounding of the heavy surf. Disappointed, Levanter came up on the deck again and continued his survey there.

Suddenly he stopped short, his eyes fell upon the empty boat davits in the stern. He walked over and examined them carefully. The blocks and tackle were close hauled to the top of the davits, and the slack of the rope was coiled about the deck. The life-boat was gone!

Levanter thought deeply and intensely. In what condition was the lifeboat when he and his men wrecked the schooner on the beach? To the best of his recollection, the boat had been left on the davits. In fact, he was almost sure of it, because he remembered ordering his men to break in its sides. He looked over the side to make sure that the boat was not lying waterlogged in the surf. There was no trace of it. Having made sure of this, he scrambled back ashore and went over to Mary. Throughout the time he had been on the schooner she had stood waiting, deep in thought, puzzling her brain for some plausible excuse to explain her actions. She realized she had been caught red-handed, and she knew that whatever the outcome of the present situation, Levanter would be suspicious and watch her every action. It certainly meant the end of her plan to cripple his adventure by means of one of his own bombs. Also, it was quite possible that he would considerably restrict her liberty or movement about the island.

"Where is the lifeboat?" he queried, somewhat irritably.

"How should I know?" replied Mary.

"Well it's missing," continued Levanter, "and you must know something about it, otherwise I can't understand what you are doing here."

"I don't know anything about it," Mary retorted with heat, unashamed at the lie. "Didn't you break it up? That's what you told me before."

"So I did, but I left it hanging on the davits, and it isn't there now, and what's more, I find you doing a most unaccountable thing around here. That's what I can't understand. There must be some connection in this thing, and you might as well tell me what it is. If you think you can get away from me, you are very foolish."

"I am not so silly," said Mary, "I know I can't get away and I'm not going to take any foolish chances. There's nothing I can tell you about your old boat."

For several minutes Levanter plied her with questions in a vain effort to trap her into some admission that would give him a clue to the mystery that confronted him. She answered readily enough at first, but in a completely non-committal manner, and when he began to press her more closely she became more reticent, and finally refused to answer at all. This attitude set fire to the kindling ferocity in Levanter's temper and he stepped toward her.

Realizing the change and really alarmed, Mary began to walk away toward the huts. She had no idea what to do, except that she thought it wise to get as far away from him as she could while he was in his present threatening mood. He strode after her angrily.

“Why don’t you answer me?” he demanded as he reached to grasp her.

She evaded him readily enough, but for the first time in her life she was really afraid. In fact she was almost terror-stricken. More than ever the realization dawned upon her that she was completely within the man’s power and at the present moment alone with him.

“Don’t you dare to touch me!” she exclaimed.

The pirate laughed at her. “Why, what would you do?” he asked.

Then, as she did not answer, he continued, “My dear girl, there is nothing that you can do. You will have to do as I tell you. You can’t get away from me. I am determined to find out just what you were doing up at the schooner, and you might as well tell me now as later.”

While he was talking Mary was walking slowly forward, watching him closely out of the corner of her eye. There had flashed through her mind the memory of their last encounter when he had flared up and tried to seize her—the time when Walter Johnston, the pirate’s chief assistant, interrupted in her behalf. As far as she knew all the members of the pirate crew

were still out on the airplane, laying mines along the coast, and consequently she was alone on the island with Levanter, with the exception of course of the Kanakas. It was no use looking to them for any assistance.

Helpless as she apparently was, however, Mary still hoped that by some fortunate chance the crew had already returned from the mine laying trip, so she steadily walked along, hoping against hope that she would attract the attention of Johnston.

The momentary laugh which had escaped from Levanter tempered the intensity of his wrath somewhat, but he was still in a highly inflamed temper. He continued after Mary, trying hard to solve the mystery surrounding the incident which had given rise to the present situation. They continued in this manner for several minutes, to Mary's great relief, until finally they came up to the huts.

The Kanakas were all busily engaged at the tasks which had become routine to them. Mary felt a little easier because, while it was extremely doubtful just what they would do in case the pirate molested her, she felt that she was not as isolated as she had been at the opposite side of the harbor where the wreck of the Hilo was lying.

She gave a quick glance toward the airplane-mooring place, but her hopes were quickly dashed, for there was no sign of the machine. She realized now that it was a case of her

wits against the temper of the pirate. There was no use going any further, she figured, as that would take her away from the Kanakas, and she realized bitterly that Levanter would follow her wherever she went. She tried hard to think of some way of getting out of the mess, but nothing occurred to her.

Suddenly she turned around and faced Levanter.

“Why do you keep following me?” she cried. “What do you want of me?”

The violent anger which had possessed Levanter had cooled down considerably. During the walk from the schooner he had been thinking hard, going back over every possible detail and every incident that he could think of that had taken place during Mary’s stay on the island.

As a result of this recollection, three things stood out prominently in his memory.

First, the unexpected, unexplained and untraced disappearance of his man, Harrison, which had long since passed out of his mind.

Second, the decided change which had recently come over Mary in regard to her attitude toward him and her sudden interest in all of his plans and activities; and

Third, the unusual task she was engaged in when he surprised her a short time ago.

Surely, he reflected, there must be some connection between these things. But what that connection was he could not figure out.

A new thought suddenly came into his mind:

Had Harrison turned traitor on him?

The very idea caused his anger to flare up again. Had Harrison got away in the Hilo's lifeboat? No? he thought to himself, that would have been impossible. He could not have repaired it and made it seaworthy in such a short time, and besides his disappearance had been discovered immediately. Moreover, the search he and his men had made with the airplane the following day would have quickly disclosed the presence of any boat on the sea, and he remembered that the search had been very thorough indeed. Not only this, but the search on the island itself had been very complete. Finally he dismissed the thought by deciding that Harrison had been drowned after all.

Having convinced himself on this point, he tried to reason out some plausible explanation of the other incidents which were puzzling him. His thoughts kept him so fully engrossed that he was completely oblivious of his surroundings. The sudden exclamation of Mary brought him back to actualities. He looked at her for a few moments before replying, his temper mounting rapidly again.

"By God!" he said finally, "I'm going to find out what you were doing and what it was all about."

"Do you mean you are going to hurt me?" demanded Mary, with a show of defiance.

"Suppose I decide to," he said with a sneer. "who do you think would stop me?"

"If you try to molest me, I shall call the Kanakas."

"A lot of good they would do you!" he jeered. "You needn't get alarmed, though. I'm not going to hurt you. At any rate, not now."

Then, as though to belie his words, he started over toward her, saying as he went:

"What do you know about that man of mine, Harrison, who disappeared?"

As he spoke Levanter raised his hand and brought it down on Mary's shoulder. He had scarcely touched her when he uttered a cry of pain, and then suddenly fell in a heap upon the ground.

Mary was completely staggered at the sudden turn of affairs. For several moments she stood in stupified silence, looking at the pirate who was writhing in agony where he lay. Finally collecting her wits, she said:

"What's the matter?"

"Good Lord!" he gasped, "I've been shot."

"Shot!" exclaimed Mary incredulously. "Who could have shot you? I didn't hear anything."

"I don't know," he replied weakly.

"Where are you hurt?" she asked.

"In my right leg. I think the bone is shattered."

Suddenly a great light dawned on Mary. Surely it must have been Redmond who had fired the shot. It was a long time since she had received the welcome code letters over the wireless from the big government naval radio

station at Honolulu which told of his safe arrival there, and she had been waiting anxiously day by day for his return. Many times had she strolled expectantly to their old meeting place in the hope of seeing him, only to be disappointed. Surely this must be Redmund now. Who else could have fired the shot?

Almost instinctively she turned and looked over to the rock. Suddenly her heart leaped with joy; there at the side of the boulder she could clearly make out his head peering out from behind it. Unthinkingly she motioned him to get back. Then realizing that her gesture might have been observed by the pirate, she turned in alarm at her foolish action.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

Fortunately for Mary Ingleton the pirate was in such intense pain he had not observed the motion she had made when signalling Redmond to get back behind the rock. She realized that if he became aware of the latter's presence on the island their chance of escape would be very slim indeed, but she felt sure that Levanter was in far too much pain at the present moment to ask questions about the bullet that had wounded him. Having assured herself that for the moment everything was safe, she bent toward the wounded man and said:

"I'm going over to get the Kanakas to come over and carry you into the hut."

He murmured his assent between groans.

Seizing the opportunity thus presented, Mary walked as far as the first house between herself and Levanter, where she was in sight of the rock behind which Redmond was hiding. She waved her arm until she saw his head cautiously emerge from the rock. Then she gave him the signal to remain there until she could come over.

Having assured that Redmond had understood

her, Mary went over to the shop where the Kanakas were at work. Having found the chief, she explained to him what had happened, and in a few moments the whole gang walked over with her to the place where Levanter was lying.

It took but a few moments to improvise a stretcher under Mary's direction, and the wounded man was carefully placed upon it by the tribesmen. This completed, the Kanakas bandaged up the injured leg to prevent further bleeding and carried Levanter over to the living hut where they placed him on a bed.

As they entered the room Mary, who was following in the rear, happened to cast a quick glance toward the rough table on which the pirate generally did his planning. A familiar looking paper was lying on it. A closer but quick glance showed here it was the chart of the island, marked with the position of every mine which the pirate had sown around the island. Making use of her opportunity, Mary hurriedly snatched it and thrust it in the neck of her dress.

Immediately after Levanter had been laid upon the bed Mary went over and asked him how he felt. He answered in a gruff manner. Then she said:

"I don't know whether I should but if there is anything I can do for you I will."

"I don't want anything," he replied ungraciously.

"Well, then" she added, "I am going out to

see if I can see the airplane and if so get them to come to you immediately."

Without waiting any further she walked out of the hut. Once outside, she looked quickly over the harbor and, convincing herself that there was no sign of the pirate aircraft, hurried over to the rock where Redmond was hiding.

She went straight behind the rock where she was completely out of sight of the settlement along the beach. As she was behind its sheltering form she turned toward the former airship officer and with all the fervor in her voice she exclaimed:

"Oh! I'm so glad you are back, Mr. Redmond! I thought you would never come."

As she said this Marry uttered a deep sigh. In it were concentrated all the mingled emotions that had been pent up within her. It brought to her a sense of security and contentment such as she had not felt since she came to the island and it removed the terrific strain on her nerves which had almost resulted in a swoon.

For Redmond this was one of the epochal moments of his life. Through his mind there rushed tumultuously a hundred thoughts in a pell-mell fashion, but overshadowing all, there was the impelling desire to grasp the girl before him in his arms and tell her how deeply he loved her. For a few seconds there was a desperate struggle within him between desire and wisdom, and throughout that time he remained tongue-tied.

It had been a most trying hour for him indeed. Ever since he had fired the shot which wounded the pirate his mind had been preyed upon by the thought that perhaps his hasty action had ruined all chances of rescuing the girl whose existence he was convinced meant his future happiness.

He shuffled uneasily and finally blurted out: "I couldn't get here before, Miss Mary."

The spell at last broken, Redmond plunged into his narrative and told his companion all that happened since the time he pushed off alone in the dead of the night on his fateful trip in the frail lifeboat.

"We are in a pretty bad mess," he concluded, "because I don't know how long it will be before the relief ship is able to get here, and it will be impossible to get you off the island until it does get here. That's the reason why I am afraid that I made a mistake in shooting Levanter. From here it looked as though he was going to strike you, and I just lost my head and shot him."

"Don't worry about it," said Mary with a soothing tone in her voice, "perhaps it will all turn out for the best, after all. At least, let's hope so."

She then told him what had happened and the reason for the scene which had led up to the shooting. At that point she added:

"Oh! while I was in his room just now, I saw the chart he had with all the places where

he has put those dreadful mines. I picked it up. Do you think it will be of any use to you?"

"Will it?" said Redmond with glee. "Why, that's the best thing we could possibly get hold of. I'll give it to the captain of the ship that is coming in place of the Farragut."

Thus they talked for quite a while until Mary suddenly came back to realities.

"The airplane will be back any time now," she said. "What do you think I had best do?"

Redmond thought a while before replying. It was indeed a serious situation, and difficult to decide just what to do. There was no doubt that both of them would have to be extremely careful, as the pirate's wound would have to be explained somehow. The crew would undoubtedly suspect the presence of a stranger on the island. Having turned the problem over in his mind thoroughly, Redmond finally said:

"At first I was going to suggest that you come along with me and take a chance of escaping at the first opportunity, but as we don't know just when the next cruiser will get here, it would mean that we would both have to hide on the island until it arrived, and that would be suicidal. I hate to send you back there, Miss Mary, but I think it would be best under the circumstances, and it might allay to their suspicions. Besides, it will make the whole affair more of a mystery to them. You will have to deny all knowledge of how the shooting occurred."

"If you were to disappear at this time," Redmond continued, "they would begin to search the island. Maybe they will anyway. I'm going to be as careful as I can. Much more so than I was before. I'm going to the southern end of the island tonight and send out a call on the portable wireless set I have there, in the hope of picking up whatever cruiser is coming along to take the place of the Farragut. I'll try to get back to the rock here tomorrow if the conditions are right."

Then after a short pause he added:

"I know it's going to be very trying and very hard for you, Miss Mary, but I think it's the best thing to do under the circumstances. I'll try to keep within call of you in case of need. You know I'm armed now and that makes a great difference to both of us."

Mary listened very attentively to all he said. As soon as he had finished she replied without any hesitation:

"I don't mind it at all now that you are on the island again. Before you came back I was really afraid at times. You see I was all alone with these terrible men. Now I feel brave again. Don't worry about me. I'll be able to take care of myself alright, but I really think I should be going back now before the airplane comes in again."

Before Mary got up to go they both glanced cautiously around the sheltering rock to make sure that everything was clear. There was still

no sign of the outlaw aircraft in the harbor. For several seconds they both looked at each other in silence, then Mary put out her hand and Redmond grasped it.

“Au Revoir,” she said simply.

That was all. A moment later she was already walking resolutely toward the harbor.

From behind the sheltering form of the rock he watched, his mind a prey to a thousand fears over her safety and the disturbing thought that his judgement in sending her back might eventually prove to have been wrong.

Mary walked steadily forward. Not once did she turn back, although she was strongly tempted to. She was wondering whether Redmond was staying at the rock, or whether he had already left for the other side of the island. She was in high spirits. The gravity of the situation confronting her did not impress itself upon her mind in any way. Somehow, subconsciously, the conviction that everything would turn out alright had settled upon her, removing all fears that had beset her a short time ago. Her spirits were as buoyant now as they had been depressed a few hours ago. The pendulum of life had swung to the side of hope at last.

When she neared the beach she saw the airplane turn the headland on the eastern side of the harbor as it moved along the surface of the sea. She stopped abruptly, then watched a while, as it came slowly in toward its mooring. As it got closer she commenced to walk slowly

up and down as though she had been doing nothing else at any time.

It was not long before the crew had secured the machine to its mooring and made their way ashore. Johnston was in the lead, and Mary went over toward him. The unusual greeting surprised the pirate's chief lieutenant, and he exclaimed:

"What's the matter, Miss?"

"Levanter had an accident," she replied. "That's what I came to tell you. His leg is hurt. He's in the hut. He says he was shot, but I don't know what's the matter."

"Shot!" exclaimed Johnston incredulously. "Who could have shot him?"

"That's what I can't say," answered Mary truthfully enough.

Johnston clearly showed his perplexity.

"That sounds dam' funny to me—Oh! excuse me, Miss," he blurted apologetically, "but I can't get that at all. Well, anyway, let's go over and see what's happened."

Mary went after him as he strode rapidly toward the hut where the pirate was lying. He was already inside the room before she reached the door. He went over to the cot and asked vigorously:

"What in 'ell's happened?"

"I've been shot, Walter," replied Levanter weakly.

"Who the devil could shoot you?"

"I don't know. I was talking to Mary when it happened. I got it in the leg."

Without further ado Johnston bent over and examined the injured leg. The Kanakas had been bathing the wound under the feeble instructions Levanter had been able to give them.

By this time the rest of the crew had entered the room, and Mary was standing by the door.

"Is there anything I can do?" she inquired.

"No," replied Johnston gruffly.

He turned to the others and ordered them to get a piece of wood to act as a splint to bind the pirate's leg up. He then went over to the emergency medicine chest and made a dressing for the wound.

All hands worked quickly, and it was not long before the injured leg was bandaged up as well as could be done under the circumstances. There was no doubt about the ease it brought Levanter. He expressed it in the sigh that escaped his lips just before he fell into slumber.

After administering his aid Johnston ordered the rest of the crew out of the room, and went over to Mary.

"I want to talk to you, Miss," he said as he led her out.

Outside the hut he continued:

"I'm a plain man, Miss and I don't stand for any monkey business—it's too risky in this job. Now tell me straight what happened."

"Why I've told you all I can already," said Mary. "There's nothing else I can tell you."

“Well, he says he was talking to you when he was shot. Who shot him?”

“That’s the funniest part about it,” replied Mary. I was talking to him. He was very angry over something. He was talking to me when all of a sudden he fell over. I didn’t hear a sound and I didn’t see any one. Even the Kanakas were all inside the workshop. It may sound funny, but honestly that’s the truth.”

“Well it’s dam’ funny to me,” he said with a perplexed air. “I can’t understand it.”

“If it’s funny to you, just think how mysterious it was to me, because I was standing with him,” she said.

A sudden thought entered Johnston’s mind. Looking straight at Mary, he asked:

“Say was he trying to interfere with you?”

“Why do you ask that,” queried Mary in reply.

“Because I think you shot him,” replied Johnston menacingly.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

Redmond stayed behind the rock, watching the trend of events closely when the pirate crew came off the airplane and walked over to Mary. He saw her engage in conversation with Johnston and watched them as they hurried to the hut where they all lived.

Realizing that they would be inside for some considerable time and that there was nothing further that he could do at present, he began his journey across the island to the cove on the southern shore where he had landed from the cruiser Farragut. He was anxious to get there before darkness set in, as he was not sure that he could find the hidden boat in the dark.

Instinctively he looked at his watch. It was already four thirty in the afternoon, consequently he had no time to lose, as it would be completely dark within an hour and a half. As soon as he was out of sight from the pirate's settlement, he quickened his step as fast as the tropical growths about him would permit.

After a weary trudge he arrived at his destination, fortunately before darkness set in. He

readily located the hidden boat and took from it the portable wireless set which had been included for emergency purposes to communicate with the Farragut.

It was a very remarkable piece of apparatus, so efficiently constructed that it could be carried in the hand and yet it had an effective range of twenty-five miles in daylight. Its basic principle rested upon the discovery successfully developed by Marconi and his assistants in the year 1922, by which the electro-magnetic waves were concentrated and reflected in one direction only, just as a beam of light is concentrated and reflected in a narrow band of brilliance by a mirror reflector.

Its portability was obtained by the fact that it radiated waves of only a quarter of a meter in length. To get such radiation an alternating current of 1,200,000,000 cycles per second had to be produced. This terrifically high frequency was obtained from a wonderful development of the vacuum tube—the Alladin's lamp of radio—which had such an efficient filament that it operated from a very small dry cell.

The reflecting medium consisted of a parabolic frame arranged around the transmitter, on which were strung a number of wires which acted as the reflecting antennae. Each of these wires was one wave-length long, in other words—a quarter of a meter.

The apparatus which had been given to Redmond was designed for wireless telephone trans-

mission and reception. A small microphone and telephone were included, both of which were arranged on a holder in such fashion that when the 'phone was at the ear of the operator the microphone naturally came before the mouth. A small push button in the center of the handle switched the apparatus over from the transmitting to the receiving condition and *visa versa*.

The set could either be operated upon the ground where the direction of communication was known, or from the operator's shoulder in other cases. For the latter purpose a leather sling was attached to the framework supporting the small aerals, by which it could be suspended from the neck, thus leaving the hands of the operator free. This was a very necessary provision because the telephone-microphone had to be in one hand, and the reflector worked with the other when searching for another station whose direction was unknown.

Since Redmond did not know the whereabouts of the cruiser, which he hoped was on its way to replace the damaged Farragut, he picked up the apparatus, slung it across his shoulder and walked down the shelving rock which jutted out into the cove.

He took a position where he could command the entire southern, eastern and western approaches to the island. Although he did not know over what course the new cruiser would come, he had an idea that it would be pretty close to that which the Farragut followed when

it brought him from Honolulu back to Patrocinio. With the aid of his pocket compass he figured out the bearing of this course, then turning on the current to the filament of his vacuum tube, commenced to call:

“Hello! Hello!”

For four weary hours he kept up the incessant calling, breaking it only at intervals in order to listen for a possible reply. Not a sound came to him from the black expanse beyond. By midnight he had given up all idea of getting in touch with any government vessel. After all, he thought, this was only the day after the Farragut had placed him ashore and the possibility of any relief ship being in the neighborhood so soon was very slight. He had gone there on the bare possibility that one of the other cruisers which were patrolling in the vicinity might have been intercepted and ordered to Patrocinio.

Having come to the conclusion that further calling was useless, Redmond groped his way ashore in the darkness, placed his apparatus beneath some foliage and lay down and slept.

The following morning he set up his radio in the lifeboat and made his way to his cave. During his previous stay he had discovered a narrow ledge inside just above his head. Further investigation now showed that it would make an ideal couch and, moreover, a good place to lay in hiding in the event that he was

closely pressed in any search that might be made.

After a brief rest during the noon-day heat he made his way cautiously to the rock where he had always met Mary. He lay down alongside it and watched, but though he stayed there practically until sundown, he did not see a soul.

It was with very downcast heart that he made his way back to his crude habitation. He was very worried about the safety of Mary more so because of his inability to do anything that would help her. If he had only caught a glimpse of her even without being able to speak to her, his mind would have been much easier. As it was, he was a prey to all kinds of grave doubts,

He decided earlier in the day that it was practically useless to go back to the southern cove for at least three days, consequently he had to make daily trips to the rendezvous instead, in order to keep as close a watch over the pirate crew as possible and protect Mary, if necessary.

The next day passed as had the preceeding one, without a sight of Mary, although on this day Redmond had seen the crew of the pirate craft moving about at various tasks around the hut and upon the airplane. Again with heavy heart, and weary mind and body he gave up his monotonous vigil and went back to his cave.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

On the fourth day Redmond woke up uneasily. He was tortured by a mental uneasiness such as oftentimes preceds events of great moment in life. He had the feeling of impending disaster and a gloomy mood cast its overshadowing mantle about him, penetrating not only his mind but also his body until it seemed to sap all his strength.

He tried vainly to cast it from him, but his efforts were of no avail. Sluggishly and almost sullenly he forced himself forward and made his way to the meeting place. Once there, he threw himself down behind the rock and almost automatically peered out as cautiously as ever upon the beach below.

What he saw immediately dispelled the shadows of gloom and galvanized him into alert attention. The entire piratical crew with Johnston in the lead was walking down to the airplane. In the rear were some of the Kanakas, carrying packages which he rightly guessed were supplies.

He quickly surmised that they were about to make a flight, and he watched them with the

keenest interest. It did not take long to transfer the load the Kanakas had carried into the airplane, and within a short time afterwards the machine taxied over the surface of the water and took off into the air.

Redmond was well covered where he was, as the tropical vegetation was quite thick about the rock. His previous stay upon the island had proven that there was no prospect of his being seen from the air, even when the machine flew low over the island, which it rarely did. On this occasion it flew straight over sea, climbing rapidly as it went.

Shortly after the Kanakas had returned to the hut Redmond's heart leapt with joy, as he saw Mary emerge from the living house. She looked around a few moments and began to walk toward the rock. Redmond could scarcely restrain his impulsive desire to jump up and meet her. Only the realization of the utter folly of such a move restrained him. As she came within hearing distance, he called out:

"Good morning, Miss Mary! I've been very worried about you. You don't know how relieved I am."

She quickly took her place near him, but still in full view of the beach, pretending to be reading a book which she had purposely brought with her.

"I am awfully glad to get here," she said.

Redmond paused a few moments, wondering what to say, but finally blurted out:

“I’ve been imagining all kinds of terrible things, Mary, and reviling myself for having sent you back to that gang.”

Suddenly he stopped short and reddened deeply, as he realized that he had called her familiarly for the first time in his life. She turned toward him as he spoke and noticed his evident embarrassment. She immediately divined the cause, but with true feminine wisdom passed it by pretending not to have noticed it.

“I couldn’t get out before,” she said, “because they have been watching me all the time. Levanter is very ill. He is quite feverish, and at times has been a little delirious. He kept saying that the man Harrison had betrayed him and that I had helped him to do it. The rest of them couldn’t get any sense out of Levanter’s words but Johnston has become very suspicious. He has been pestering me with questions all the time he was not trying to get some sense out of Levanter. I’m sure that he is really mad. Last night he threatened me and kept bullying me, trying to find how Levanter was shot. At first he accused me of doing it but he doesn’t any more. Last night he told me he was determined to find out what was back of it all. He said he would go out in the airplane to see if any of the government ships were ‘snooping around.’ Those were the words he used. Really, I am afraid of him.”

Redmond thought long and deeply. He was convinced that the time for action had arrived,

but precipitate action might spoil all chance of safety. What should he do? If only the other cruiser were here they could both seize this opportunity and leave the island. He hated himself at the present thought of sending the girl he loved back to the pirate gang. The situation had already passed into the critical stage, and there was no telling what might happen when the crew arrived. Nor was there any doubt that the pirate crew would soon discover the cruiser which must be heading toward the island by this time, now that the pirates were in the air.

Suddenly he made up his mind. Turning to the girl beside him, he said gravely:

“Mary, I’m not going to let you go back there.”

“But do you think that’s safe?” she inquired. “I’m not a bit afraid as long as I know you are on the island, Mr. Redmond. They would come after me surely, don’t you think, and you know your cruiser is not here yet.”

“It’s a risk whatever we do,” he said, “and I prefer taking the risk which I can control best. You know I’m armed now, and we could fight them from cover if they came after us and located us. When they get back this time, there’s no telling what they’ll do. That gang of cut-throats would abandon *Levanter* readily enough if they figured it was necessary to save their own skins. They are just as likely to fly away tomorrow for good as not, and if they did they would probably take you along with them. I hate

to think of it and I'm not going to take the chance. That man Johnston probably suspects that the government authorities know the island he is on now. I feel sure that's why he went off in the airplane this morning.

"Do you really think it's best then that I go with you?" asked Mary.

"Indeed I do," replied Redmond, "and I think it best to get started right away."

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

It was late in the afternoon when Johnston, in a towering rage, brought the airplane down upon the waters of the harbor. He was convinced now that they had been betrayed in some way which he could not understand. During the lengthy flight which had been made at a very high altitude and which covered an enormous stretch of the Pacific, he had observed the cruiser New Orleans headed apparently toward the island. He had watched it carefully and noted that the course and speed of the ship were far too fast and straight for patrol duty. Moreover, he was confirmed in his suspicion that her present course would take her straight to Patrocinio.

It was until late in the day that he had first seen the ship. The flight had first been in an easterly direction. In the course of it several steamers had been observed but no particular attention was paid to them. The New Orleans, however, was traversing such an unusual course that she was distinctly conspicuous.

As soon as the airplane had been made fast, Johnston ordered the crew ashore.

"You guys had better stick around here. You've got to do some mighty snappy work pretty soon, I'm telling you," he exclaimed.

He strode over to the huts and rushed into Levanter's room. Seeing that the latter was awake and ignoring his condition, he asked roughly:

"Where's that woman?"

Levanter was very weak with pain and very feverish. He turned wearily on his pillow and replied:

"I don't know. I haven't seen her today."

"You've got us in a hell of a mess!" exclaimed Johnston. "I told you it was a damn fool trick to bring her here, but you would have your way. Now look at us."

"What's the matter?" inquired Levanter.

"Matter, hell! I can tell you what's the matter when you tell me who shot you."

"I don't know that either."

"That's what you've told me. There's something to be real worried about. Looks as though we'll have to make a quick getaway from here. There's one of them damn government boats coming right here, and take it from me there's some one on this blasted island besides us, and I'm going to find out who it is right now, and what's more, your little lady friend is going along with me to find 'em. If I'm right and they get gay with their guns, they can take a chance of hitting her too."

Without waiting for any further reply from

his chief, Johnston went over to Mary's room, grasped the knob and pushed the door open, crying out as he did so:

"Hey! young lady, come out here, I want to talk to you."

Getting no response, he walked in. A quick but thorough search convinced him that she was not inside. He then went out and, getting the crew together, ordered them to make a search for her and bring her to him as quickly as they could find her.

They scattered about to different parts around the shore of the harbor where Mary had been in the habit of going. While they were thus engaged Johnston went into the workshop, grabbed hold of the chief Kanaka and put him through a heavy fire of questions about the movements of Mary while he had been away on his flight.

The questioning was fruitless, and Johnston finally gave it up in disgust. He went out and waited for his men to return. It was getting close to sundown, and that fact added to his anger, as he realized that he could do nothing after dark.

After a while all of the men returned, each bringing the same report they had found no trace of the girl. Johnston strode up and down for a few moments, swearing viciously while the men stood meekly by. Finally he turned to them and said:

"Fix up everything on the ship. We've got to get out of here in a hell of a hurry, and I want

to have everything right. Get me?"

They did his bidding without question. As he watched he tried to work out some plan of escaping the unwelcome situation. The disappearance of Mary did not perplex him at all. Although he had not expected it, the fact that she wasn't around confirmed the guess he had made during the flight that some one else was on the island. Why he had come to that conclusion, he did not know; but once it entered his mind, he accepted it as the most logical means of explaining Levanter's wound.

How many strangers there were on the island, and how they got there, he did not even bother to speculate upon. He just naturally accepted the belief that Harrison in some way or other had betrayed them.

As soon as the men had completed the work of putting fuel and provisions aboard the airplane, he ordered them to place the most valuable and most easily removable loot gathered from the three airships shot down by the pirate in the airplane. This done, he said:

"Beat it, and get something to eat quick. When you're through bring your guns out with you. We may need 'em. You've got a bunch of work to do tonight."

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

No sooner had Redmond made up his mind to take Mary Ingleton with him than they both set out for the other side of the island. It was the first time she had been beyond the rock which had always been their meeting place. When they came to the cave in the center of the island they took a short rest, and Redmond showed her the place where he had lived so long. They soon started out again, but the progress was very slow, as Mary was not used to the rough going, and he had to assist her quite frequently.

She was quite tired out by the time they reached the southern cove. Redmond got some blankets, which were stowed away in the boat, and laid them out, so that she could lie down and rest awhile. He then went out and plucked some of the tropical fruit and brought it to her, as well as a beaker full of water from the nearby stream. She took the food gratefully, and, after eating, fell into a light sleep.

In the meantime Redmond brought out his portable wireless set and carried it over to the rock where it would be in readiness for use as soon as

darkness set in. He also took out the spare gun he had brought in the boat and laid it alongside Mary for her use in case of emergency. His own gun he carried slung across his shoulder all the time, and in addition had a revolver in the holster strapped to his waist.

These preparations served to keep his mind away from the worrying thoughts regarding the wisdom of his present move. Once the tasks were completed, however, they came back to torture him. He sat down beside Mary, slipped the rifle from his shoulder and let it drop between his hands where it would be ready for instant use. With every sense keenly alert, his ears were strained for any unusual sound that might come from the part of the island they had just left.

Thus he watched and waited but nothing happened.

As the sun began to race toward the Western horizon he gently awoke the sleeping girl beside him.

"It will be dark soon, Mary," he said, "and we'll have to be very careful then. I'm going to start calling on the wireless as soon as the sun goes down, and I want you to be on the watch for the gang while I do it."

Mary was fully refreshed from her sleep and was in buoyant spirits.

"It's all awfully exciting," she said, with a little laugh. "You would scarcely believe it, but

I feel really happy for the first time since I have been on this wretched island.”

Redmond's heart beat rapidly and he turned quick toward her. What did those fateful words really mean? With difficulty he restrained his impulse to grasp her within his arms and tell her of the love which he felt for her. His calmer judgement intervened before he could execute the dictates of his heart.

“I'm very glad,” was all he could say, and even that escaped his lips in the most incoherent manner.

He then went over to the rock where he had left his portable radio set. Taking it up over his shoulders, he began to send out the general call which had been agreed upon when the *Farragut's* crew had passed him ashore, listening now and then for a possible reply. Carefully and slowly he searched in every direction with the reflectors as he worked.

It was a monotonous task and one which required the utmost concentration—a task to try the patience of even the most persistent man. Redmond was made of the stuff that knows no defeat. He vigorously quashed the desire which naturally sprang up within his mind to drop his efforts because of their futility and applied himself still more earnestly to the task before him.

For two hours he kept it up, his low toned, oft repeated, “Hello Check” the code call agreed upon becoming more and more wearisome as the time passed on. Ever and anon he would pause

and peer through the darkness toward the dimly outlined figure of the girl who was keeping watch over the northern approaches to the little cove.

She was sitting up alongside the rock, resting against it, but in such position that he could clearly see her outlined figure. The night was dark, in spite of the stars studding the heavens.

Thus passed the early part of the evening, and lapsed into the second watch of the night when suddenly there came an abrupt halt in the monotonous call of Redmond's oft repeated, "Hello, Check."

Rapidly he made a few delicate adjustments on the set about his shoulders and, holding his mouth a little closer to the microphone in his hand, said:

"Hello! What ship is that?"

This break in the monotony aroused Mary from the stupor which had been enveloping her gradually, and she involuntarily straightened up, keenly alert. Her first impulse was to inquire what had happened, but she quickly suppressed it and waited patiently.

"Where are you now?" was the next question Redmond asked over his 'phone.

He had picked up the long expected relief ship and learned that it was the "New Orleans," and to his great joy had also been told that Captain Moore of the "Farragut" was in command.

"Wait a moment and I'll find out," came the

response from the operator on the war-vessel.

Redmond took advantage of their brief respite to turn to Mary and tell her the gladsome news. She was so excited that she made a few steps toward him, but he cautioned her to remain and listen as attentively as the wireless conversation would allow for any intruder.

A few seconds later the voice came back in the receivers upon his ears:

“The Captain says we are about fifty miles SSE of you right now.”

“Fine!” replied Redmond. “Tell him I have got a chart of the mine positions around the island, and he can come up within eight miles of the cove, but no closer. A small launch can be used for the landing. Tell him I’ve got Miss Ingleton here at the cove, and it is imperative that she be taken off tonight. The pirates are hunting us now.”

The operator acknowledged the message and after a pause came back on his transmitter and said:

“Captain says he is putting on full steam and will have a boat there in two hours from now.”

With a sigh of relief Redmond unstrapped the apparatus and laid it carefully upon the rock, so that it was still pointing in the same direction as it was when he had been conversing with the operator of the “New Orleans.”

He then went over to the place where his companion was sitting.

“I’ve got some great news for you, Mary,”

he said as he looked at her intently in the darkness. While he could not see her features, he could, by that inexplicable means which sometimes permits us to divine another's thoughts, tell what her feelings were. He continued before she could speak.

"I hope you won't mind my calling you Mary. I've just picked up the other cruiser. It will be here in two hours, and they are going to take you right off the island tonight."

Mary's heart was too full for words. The moment she had been praying for and hoping for and looking forward to for months had at last arrived. Soon she would be on her way back to her parents. The possibility overwhelmed her and left her momentarily speechless.

Redmond misinterpreted her silence and blurted out:

"Really, Miss Mary, I'm sorry, but—er—"

His floundering brought her back to realities and she rapidly intervened.

"Oh, dear, there's nothing to apologize for. You are splendid. I don't know how I shall ever be able to thank you for all that you have done for me. I've been waiting for this moment a long time, but it came so suddenly that I did not know just what to say. Really I can't believe it even now. It all seems like a dream,—too good to be true."

"Then you are not angry with me?" asked Redmond with relief.

"Of course not, Howard,—how could I be?"

she replied with a coquettish laugh.

It was the first time she had ever used his name and it electrified him.

“Mary,” he exclaimed impulsively and stopped abruptly.

She waited for a few moments, then said simply:

“Well, Howard?”

“I was just going to say that it will seem like a long time before the boat gets here,” he replied lamely.

‘Oh! she ejaculated.

There was something in that simple sound which so clearly expressed disappointment, that it aroused all the conflicting emotions he had been prey to ever since he realized his love for her. Again he felt those alternate doubts and hopes which confounded his otherwise decisive nature and robbed him of the power to speak his mind unhesitatingly. He was too afraid of a refusal, and rather than risk it, he chose to remain quiet.

Mary intuitively had long since guessed his secret, and she fully realized the cause of his embarrassment. Somehow the happiness she experienced when the realization of her hope of escape from the pirate came was not an altogether unalloyed feeling. There was a new and strange element in it, and in her heart she knew what it was. For several seconds both were lost in deep thought.

Mary finally broke the silence by asking him:

"What are you going to do when we get on the cruiser?"

"I'm coming back here," he replied.

"But what for?" queried Mary in alarm.

"Well," he said slowly, "I'm going to stick around 'till we've settled with this outfit. Besides, the government people have asked me to do it, and I can't refuse them. Anyway I don't want to be a quitter, and it will be a great pleasure to see the finish of this gang."

She did not reply. What he said however, instilled within her a fear which she had never before experienced, a fear over another's safety. She wanted to urge him not to return to the island, but hesitation and a certain delicate inhibition prevented her from doing that.

Neither spoke for the next half hour each being far too engrossed with his own thoughts to indulge in conversation.

Redmond kept automatically sweeping the blackness of the night in all directions seaward in continuous and trained observation. Suddenly he exclaimed:

"I can see a light. It must be the cruiser."

"Where?" she asked.

"Look straight along my finger and you will see it," he replied, holding out his arm and pointing his finger toward the faint pin-point of light in the distance.

"Oh! yes, I see it," she exclaimed joyfully. "Oh, dear! It's just too wonderful for words."

Redmond got up. "I'm going to speak to

him," he said. He then walked over to the place where he had left his wireless apparatus. He let it lay open upon the rock, merely picking up the microphone and switching on the current.

"Hello! 'New Orleans,' he called.

The answer came immediately, then he continued:

"We can see your lights now. When do you expect to send a boat?"

There was a short pause, and the operator came back:

"Captain says he will come to you in ten minutes and put out a launch right away. He's not going to take any chances of coming any closer tonight.

"All right," responded Redmond. "We'll be waiting for you. I'm going to turn this off now."

He then went back to his companion and told her the news.

"You might as well come over to the rock now, Mary, so we'll be ready when the boat gets here."

She assented, and he assisted her over the difficult ground in the darkness. Then they both sat down.

Fifteen minutes later they heard the smooth-toned exhaust of the power launch as it plowed its way through the water toward them, and shortly afterwards they were both outlined vividly in the rays of the searchlight which was

suddenly thrown on by the oncoming boat.

"Thank God!" he said fervently. "You are safe at last, Mary."

It did not take long for the launch to pull up alongside the rock. The manoeuvre was greatly assisted by the illuminating rays of the searchlight. A couple of sailors held it fast to the rock by means of boat-hooks, and an officer sprang ashore.

"Good evening," he said, then added after bowing: "My name is Lockwood."

"This is Miss Ingleton," replied Redmond, who then introduced himself and continued: "I think we had better push off right away, Lieutenant. There's no telling how soon that pirate gang will be after us."

They both assisted Mary into the launch, and Lockwood gave the order to let go. The words had scarcely left his mouth when a shot rang out from the foliage fringing the cove.

"Douse that light," yelled Lockwood as he rang the engine bell for full speed ahead.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

The run to the cruiser was quickly made by the launch with no casualties, despite the sudden appearance of the pirates at the cove.

“By George! That was a close shave,” exclaimed Lockwood. “If we’d been a few minutes later some one would have been hurt for sure. They would certainly have hit one of us with that searchlight on.”

As soon as they got aboard they went into Captain Moore’s cabin. The captain greeted Mary effusively and congratulated her on her fortunate rescue. Mary briefly acknowledged his solicitations and then asked anxiously:

“How was my mother when you left Honolulu, Captain?”

Redmond was standing back of her, and he put up a warning finger to his lips, which the captain fortunately saw in time.

“I am afraid, Miss Ingleton,” he replied cautiously, “that she is not so well.”

While on the island she had often asked Redmond about her mother, but he assured as best he could and always adroitly changed the subject before she could question him further.

On this occasion Mary tried to press the captain for more details, but he told her that he had not been given any direct information. He also studiously refrained from mentioning anything about her father. Seeing that she could get no further information, Mary asked disappointedly:

“How soon can we get back to Honolulu then, captain?”

“Really I can’t hold out any hope for you there either, Miss Ingleton. I’ve just got a code message from the Navy Department in Washington with instructions to wait here until further orders are received. I had planned to take you back right away, but this order came in just a few minutes ago, and I will be compelled to obey it. I don’t know just what’s going to happen, but I am going to drop out of sight of the island for the remainder of the night and come back after sun-up. We’ve got a cabin all fixed for you, Miss Ingleton, and I hope you will find everything all right. We shall do everything we possibly can to make you comfortable.”

Mary felt keenly disappointed, but did not express it. After a short conversation she retired to her room, tired out after the strenuous and exciting day she had experienced. After she had gone Redmond said:

“I’m glad you didn’t say anything, Captain, that would have indicated she had lost her mother. She’s been through a terrible ordeal,

and I'm afraid the shock of the news would be too much for her. We'll have to break it to her gradually after she has had a long rest."

Then, changing the subject, he gave the captain an outline of what had occurred since they had last seen each other.

"You say the pirate is in very bad condition," remarked Captain Moore. "Well, that changes the situation completely. It seems to me this would be a good time to land and go after him.

"Well, I don't know," replied Redmond. "I hadn't thought of it."

"By George! It looks to me like the right thing to do, especially as we know just what the situation around the island is now that we have his mine chart. I'll advise Honolulu by code through wireless and see what they have to say about it."

Having made up his mind on this point, the captain worked out the necessary code words and then sent the message in to the wireless operator with instructions to dispatch it immediately. This done, he turned to Redmond and said:

"The chances are that Honolulu will refer the matter to Washington before replying to me, but if they happen to agree with me on the advisability of landing now, would you be willing to go along and guide the landing party?"

"Why of course, I would," replied Redmond.

"Well, that's fine. I don't know whether that

gang is still hanging around this side of the island or not, but we can cover your landing with our light guns. That will hold them back until you get ashore and under cover."

"I don't think they'll stick around here," said Redmond. "They're more likely to go back and be ready to make a getaway in the airplane, take a chance on landing somewhere without being seen, and then get back to civilization without being caught. That's the way I figure it out, although, of course, you can't tell just what they will do."

Captain Moore called in his executive officer, and for the next hour all three went over every possible detail in the event that a landing would be decided upon. Redmond produced the rough chart of the island he had drawn during his first stay on it, and he pointed out to the two officers the more important aspects of its topography. They had just about completed their preliminary plans when an orderly entered the room with a message for Captain Moore. The latter took it, tore it open and hurriedly scanned its contents.

"It's in code!" he exclaimed. "Wait a moment 'till I decode it. It's the answer from Honolulu."

The others waited almost breathlessly while the captain performed the task of translation. This done, he turned to them and read:

"Concur in landing proposal. Important reinforcements will reach you at daybreak.

He paused for a moment, then continued:

“Well, we couldn’t wish for anything better than that. It looks like the beginning of the end to me now.”

“I wonder what the reinforcements will be?” said Redmond.

“I haven’t the faintest idea,” answered Captain Moore. “We’ll see soon enough in the morning. Is everything satisfactory as we have planned it?”

“Yes.”

“All right then, I’ll steam up at daybreak and be ready to put you ashore with a party and cover your landing if necessary.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

On the following morning when the sun burst over the eastern horizon with the sudden blaze of tropical brilliance the cruiser "New Orleans" was already within a few miles of Patrocinio's southern shore. The landing party was standing by fully armed, ready to board the launches which were already in the water alongside the cruiser.

On the bridge Captain Moore and the navigating officer were scanning the island through their marine glasses for any sign of the pirates.

As soon as Redmond came up on the deck the order to move was given and the men filed down the accommodation ladder into the boats. When this task had been completed the boats cast off.

Each of the launches was equipped with a one pounder quick fire gun in its bows, each of these manned by a gunner. On the cruiser the guncrews were standing by the six inch rifles ready to shell the island in case an attack was made upon the boats during their passage to the landing place.

As the boats left the cruiser Lieutenant Lock-

wood, who had been placed in command of the landing party, turned to Redmond and said:

“Do you think that outfit is still on this side of the island?”

“Well, of course I can’t say,” replied Redmond, “but my guess is that they are not. I think they withdrew to the other side.”

“Well, we’ll soon find out,” said Lockwood with a laugh.

The run to the beach was quickly made, and a landing effected without any untoward event. Lockwood got his men lined up and was about to give the order to advance when a terrific explosion seaward halted him abruptly.

“My God what was that?” he exclaimed as he, in unison with the rest, turned and looked south. One quick glance revealed the cause.

Flying moderately low, the pirate airplane was sweeping around the cruiser in rapid vicious circles in a manoeuvre of attack. The “New Orleans” was already under way, gathering headway very fast and zigzagging on her course.

As the men ashore watched with pent up excitement they saw a flash as the cruiser opened up with its anti-aircraft guns a vigorous cannonade upon the pirate. It was clear that the latter was manoeuvring for the best position to bomb the cruiser, and the explosion which had been heard ashore was undoubtedly caused by the first bomb dropped to find the range. It had

not apparently come close enough to do any damage.

The effect of the rapid fire from the "New Orleans" was quickly evidenced by the higher altitude which the pirate climbed too.

"Gee!" exclaimed Lockwood, "that's great shooting. The higher they force him the less chance he has to hit 'em. Go to it boys!" he cried excitedly.

For the moment all caution and discipline disappeared, and the men crowded around their officer to watch the unusual skirmish, shouting unheard words of encouragement to their distant shipmates.

It was not long before the second bomb fell. It hit the water with a resounding explosion, sending up a mountainous wave which blotted out the cruiser from the watchers ashore who strained their utmost to follow the effect. By this time the cruiser was close to the horizon, and it was difficult indeed to see it.

"Good God! That was close," exclaimed Lockwood anxiously. A few seconds later he sighed with relief as he saw the cruiser emerge from the obscuring but diminishing wave.

The whole thing had only occupied a few seconds but it seemed like an eternity to those ashore. Throughout the suspense there had been a ray of comfort for them in the continuous cracking reports which told them that the aerial guns of the war-vessel were still going.

Suddenly there was a lull in the sound of the

firing. Instinctively all ashore looked up, and in the sky above the distant horizon they could dimly see a number of specks about the pirate aircraft which by this time was barely visible. Pretty soon there came to them the staccato roar of machine gun fire.

“Hurrah!” shouted the men in glee, while Lockwood added joyously: “There are the reinforcements. It’s a squadron of our airplanes. Captain Moore’s quit firing because he doesn’t want to hit any of our fellows. That’s it sure.”

Redmond was not so jubilant. In fact he was greatly worried because in his mind there surged the memory of the last aerial battle between the pirate and the government aircraft. He immediately realized that unless the latter were much better equipped now, they did not stand a chance, despite their superior numbers.

The battle was being fought at terrific speed, and Johnston was evidently using every manœuvre he could execute in fighting the squadron. The changing tactics brought the contending machine nearer to the island.

At this point Redmond observed that the government pilots were not flying in squadron formation. Instead they were spread out widely and were at different altitudes, with at least five hundred feet separating any two of them. He rightly guessed that this tactic was being followed as a result of the experience gained in the previous encounter with the pirate.

At every opportunity each of the government

ships fired a burst of tracer bullets at the pirate, who was manœuvring his plane with great skill, but Redmond's expert eye quickly saw that Johnston, good as he undoubtedly was, could not compare with Levanter, and he realized that in this equality alone lay the greatest opportunity for the government craft.

The pirate gunner was fighting back vigorously whenever a chance occurred. He too was using his machine gun for all it was worth. By this time the fight was directly over the beach on which the landing party was standing. Every man had his neck craned, watching intently, almost breathlessly.

Suddenly the leading government plane shot straight across the nose of the pirate machine, level with it, and released a burst of fire which raked the pirate at short range and apparently damaged his starboard propeller.

Undaunted the pirate let loose with his three inch gun, loaded with one of the deadly liquid oxygen shells. It caught the government ship squarely. A violent flash of flame broke out momentarily like a jewel in the daylight, and what was left of the government craft plunged like a plummet into the ocean, a hundred yards from the beach. The first blood was with the pirate.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

The momentary victory of the pirate was dearly bought. He was no longer manœuvring as easily as he had been doing. His craft had become very sluggish on the turns and was making them only with great difficulty, while the uneven whir of his propellers emphasized the trouble he was experiencing. The government forces quickly observed this and began to close in on it steadily, but somewhat cautiously.

Johnston, realizing the turn in favor of his enemies, began to climb, but his ship was no longer superior to the government craft in this respect, and they easily maintained their advantage by keeping well above him.

Throughout these tactics the antagonists kept up a desultory fire with their machine guns, but no material damage was effected on either side. The latest manœuvre had taken both forces to a considerable altitude, and the men ashore had some difficulty in following the progress of the battle against the brilliant sky.

For some time the fight continued in his manner without decisive action. Redmond was feeling easier because he realized now that the

odds which were in favor of the pirate at the beginning of the battle had been neutralized by the heroic action of the pilot who sacrificed himself by deliberately running his ship across the pirate's nose to fire upon him at close range.

Redmond looked seaward. The cruiser "New Orleans" had steamed in again and was moving around at high speed on an uneven course. He turned his gaze upward again, and as he did so an exclamation of surprise escaped his lips:

All of the aerial craft were lower, but one of the government ships was directly above and very close to the pirate, traveling at the same rate of speed while the others were concentrating a burst of fire upon the outlaw plane.

Suddenly a small black object fell from the particular government ship which was in such excellent position above the pirate. A blinding flash burst where the latter had been, followed by a thundrous crash which shook even those upon the ground by the intensity of its concussion.

A gasp of awe escaped them as they watched intently. Rapidly the flash merged into the sunlight, and out of it there fell a few blackened remnants of what had been the aerial scourge of the Pacific. Straight into the sea the wreckage plunged.

The pirate was conquered at last!

The suddenness of the ending left them spell-bound. As they watched they saw the ship which

had struck the deathblow of the pirate spiraling down unevenly like a wounded bird, evidently in serious distress. The other machines were also descending.

"Good God!" was all that Lockwood could say, but his expression clearly indicated the relief he felt.

For several seconds they stood in amazed silence until all of the aircraft had descended upon the heaving surface of the ocean. By remarkable skill the pilot of the injured ship had succeeded in landing, pulling his craft out of its spin at the crucial moment, but it was indeed the roughest kind of a landing.

The other machines with their wings retracted taxied over to him as rapidly as they could go. They were none too soon, for by the time they reached him the damaged airplane, badly waterlogged, was being pounded by the heavy swell which surged over it. With great difficulty they succeeded in rescuing its crew just before the airplane disappeared below the waves.

While the rescue was being effected the cruiser steamed up to the scene, and the rest of the squadron went alongside her.

It was quite some time before Lieutenant Lockwood recovered from the amazement which had left him enthralled during the thrilling encounter in the skies. Moreover, he found it very difficult to realize that the pirate machine had been completely destroyed and its crew annihilated. After he had come back to realities he

stood for a few minutes irresolute, then turning toward Redmond, he ejaculated:

“I wonder what we’d better do now?”

Before the latter could reply one of the landing party cried out:

“The cruiser’s signalling us, sir.”

All hands watched the semaphore arms above the bridge of the war-vessel as they moved up and down rapidly forming the words of the message.

Lockwood who had read it said:

“He’s instructing us to proceed across the island at once. The cruiser’s going to steam around. Let’s go.”

CHAPTER FORTY

Upon the "New Orleans" a most distressing incident was being enacted as the cruiser proceeded around the eastern side of Patricinio Island. The commander of the squadron which had downed the pirate was none other than Kenneth Fitzgerald, and he it was who had dropped the chemical bomb which destroyed the outlaw. He was now lying unconscious on a hastily prepared cot aboard the warship in serious condition, with the ship's surgeon in attendance.

So close had he been to the pirate when the fatal bomb was released that the repercussion had damaged his ship and stricken him seriously by the full force of the concussion. By a supreme effort of will he had summoned sufficient strength to guide his gyrating craft to a landing and had collapsed completely.

His rescue under the existing conditions had been nothing short of miraculous, and only through the quick work of the rest of the squadron was it effected. They had performed the almost impossible in getting him from the water-logged machine through the heavy swell.

Mary Ingleton was at his side doing what little she could to assist the surgeon's efforts to revive him. She was in a highly nervous state, following the excitement of the recent battle, but the serious condition of Fitzgerald alarmed her and had a steadying effect upon her.

In the meantime Eric Brant, the second in command of the squadron, was giving Captain Moore an account of the details which led up to the aerial battle.

"At the time Captain Simmons was leaving Honolulu with the 'New Orleans,'" he said, "we were undergoing special secret instructions with a new type of bomb which had just arrived from Washington.

"We were told that the experts in the Chemical Corps had succeeded in duplicating the bombs manufactured by the pirate and, after further work, had improved on them. Ours are fitted with a safety device which, in the event of accident to one of our machines, automatically releases the liquid gas without explosive effect.

"They are mounted on a special rack which has a release trigger that sets a detonating cap on the bomb as it falls, so that it will explode on hitting. The instructors told us that these bombs would practically wipe out anything they struck.

"Mr. Fitzgerald was placed in command, and practically all of us had been in the first fight with the pirate, so we knew just what we had to expect from him.

“We all talked it over and we devised a new plan of attack, which we practiced every day in the air while we were awaiting instruction to move against him. In the first we were not able to attack him vigorously because we were in each other’s way to a great extent. Our new plan was designed to overcome this, and we practiced so as to be in a position where we could all attack simultaneously without fear of hitting each other.

“The most important part of our plan was to keep the pirate engaged while one of the machines manœuvred to get directly over him, so that the bomb could be dropped with a fair chance of hitting him squarely.

“We realized that our only chance to put an end to him was with one of these bombs. Our machine gun fire was therefore planned to keep him engaged so as to permit the main attacking machine to get into position, ready to drop the bomb at the first opportunity.

“Our original instructions were to be ready to proceed on order, and a supply ship was to follow up as rapidly as possible after we left. We got the order sooner than we expected. It came hurriedly after receipt of your wireless. We were told to proceed to the southern side of the island and assist you. We were very surprised to see the pirate attacking you, as we had not expected to encounter him so soon.

“It put us in a very bad position as we were pretty nearly out of fuel after our long flight.

If the scrap had lasted much longer he would have got us all for certain.

“I imagine that’s the reason Mr. Fitzgerald took such a terrible chance, so as not to miss his mark. He was too close when he dropped the bomb, and the shock damaged his ship. We were mighty lucky in being able to get him out of the water, and he did a fine piece of work in landing his ship under the circumstances.”

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

'As soon as he had received the instructions to proceed across the island from the cruiser Lieutenant Lockwood lined up his men and gave the order to advance. He took a position ahead of them, Redmond walking alongside him, leading the way through the jungle. By noon the party had reached the cave in the center of the island, and a halt was made to eat and rest during the heat of the day.

'At three o'clock in the afternoon a fresh start was made, and an hour's brisk march brought the party to the rock where Redmond had so often met Mary Ingleton.

The New Orleans was already lying off the entrance to the harbor outside the mine belt which the pirate had laid down as a protection for himself. Otherwise everything bore a normal appearance to Redmond. The familiar wisp of blue smoke curling up idly from the workshop chimney told him the kanakas were busily engaged in their regular jobs.

"Do you think we'll have any trouble with them?" Lockwood asked Redmond.

"I don't think so," replied the latter.

At this moment one of the men exclaimed:

“There’s a boat coming in from the ship, sir.”

“Well, I guess we’ll go down and meet it,” said Lockwood. He gave an order to the chief petty officer to remain with the landing party until he returned. He then set off with Redmond for the beach.

By the time they arrived there the boat was already tied up to the old mooring ring of the pirate’s airplane, and two officers had come ashore. One of them was the ship’s surgeon.

“I came along,” he told Lockwood, as soon as they caught up with one another, “to see what condition Levanter is in. If he can be moved, the captain’s instructions are to bring him aboard immediately.

“Well! We might as well get over there right away,” remarked Lockwood who then signalled to his men to join him. As soon as they came up he instructed them to seize the workshop and bring the Kanakas out.

While the landing party was engaged in this task the three officers and Redmond entered Levanter’s room in the living hut.

As they entered Redmond halted abruptly and an involuntary gasp of astonishment escaped his lips. Levanter was lying on his cot, and the Kanaka chief was alongside him. The pirate’s features had visibly shrunk and his skin was tightly drawn across his hollowed cheeks. His eyes stood out, uncanny and pierc-

ing, while the flush of fever which suffused his cheeks gave him an unnatural appearance.

He started in surprise as he saw the strangers enter his room. With an effort he raised his weakened body upon his elbows and then exclaimed:

“Who are you? How did you get here?”

Redmond went over to his bedside.

“I’m the man who shot you,” he said. “You have never seen me before, but I’ve been on your island for weeks. We are here now because you have come to the end of your rope.”

The pirate sank back upon his pillow. For several moments he remained motionless. Finally he asked:

“Where is my ship?”

“It’s lying on the bottom of the ocean,” replied Redmon.

“What happened to Johnston and my crew, then?”

“They are lying there with it. It it’s any satisfaction to you, they died fighting.”

Levanter raised himself again, his eyes flashing with hate.

“Damn you!” he snapped. “If I’d been there you wouldn’t have had a chance.”

“That’s just where you are wrong,” said Redmond coolly. “The government beat you at your own game.”

At this moment the surgeon stepped forward and pushed Redmond back. He saw how critical the pirate’s condition was, and was anx-

ious to put an end to the altercation which was rapidly causing the injured man's temperature to rise dangerously.

"Lie down," he commanded.

"What are you going to do with me?" enquired Levantner as he obeyed.

"I'm going to find out what's the matter with you," replied the surgeon who, after taking the pirate's temperature and pulse, examined the injured leg. He then dressed the wound as carefully as he could with the limited facilities at his disposal. As soon as this task was completed he went over to his two companions.

"We'll have to get back to the ship as rapidly as possible and put him in the sick bay. It's a dangerous job. The shock will probably kill him, but it's our only chance to save him. He'll die quick enough if he's left here."

"I didn't know he was as badly as that," said Redmond.

"He's in pretty bad shape," added the surgeon. "We've got to amputate that leg, and there's no time to lose. In fact, I think it's too late now."

Without further ado Lockwood went out. The landing party had already marshalled the Kanakas together outside the huts and was standing by waiting further instructions.

Lockwood called two of his men over to him and ordered them to carry the pirate on the stretcher into the launch. He then instructed the others to wait with the Kanakas until a

boat could be sent over from the warship to transfer the wounded pirate.

The two men quickly lifted the latter on the stretcher and then carried him down to the landing place where the three officers assisted in placing him aboard.

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

As soon as the launch came up alongside the cruiser "New Orleans" it was fastened to the block and tackle of its davit and hoisted up until it was level with the main deck. When this had been done it was pulled inboard, and from this position the wounded pirate was lifted out under the supervision of the surgeon and carried down to the ship's hospital.

Redmond and the two officers had previously got off the launch and had gone up the accommodation ladder. Captain Moore was on deck to meet them.

"Well, I guess our job's done, captain," said Redmond.

"Yes," replied the commander. "We were very lucky in many ways, especially in the fortunate arrival of our airplane squadron. The government owes you a great deal, though. If it hadn't been for your splendid work, the pirate would have still been operating."

Redmond flushed under the praise, stuttered a moment and changing the embarrassing subject, said:

“How is the pilot of the ship which we brought down?”

“Ah! there’s where we were unlucky,” replied Captain Moore. “That pilot was the commander of the squadron, and he’s in very bad shape suffering from shock.”

“I’m sorry to hear that indeed. He certainly had his nerve attacking the way he did. Who is he?”

“Commander Fitzgerald.”

“What!” exclaimed Redmond in astonishment.

The captain looked at him, surprised at the manner in which he spoke. “Why, do you know him?” he asked.

“Yes,” said Redmon sharply.

“Well he’s on the quarterdeck now, resting easily the last time I saw him. Miss Ingleton is nursing him. Do you want to see him?”

Redmond pondered a moment before replying. The news imparted to him innocently enough by Captain Moore had brought him back from the realm of action and excitement into that of sentiment. For several seconds his mind was prey to a score of bitter thoughts. Again he fought with himself as he realized that another man stood between him and the possibility of his future happiness. The knowledge enraged him, and for the first time in his life he experienced the violence of hatred.

He hated himself as well, and in his mind he railed at the fate which had led him to the

altar of love and then dashed happiness from his grasp. He was more than ever convinced that Mary and Fitzgerald were betrothed. The words uttered many weeks ago by the Base Commander at Honolulu, which clearly indicated it, came back to taunt him as he struggled with his conflicting emotions.

Finally his better nature began to exert itself. At least, he argued with himself, Mary would be happy now, and after all that was the most important thing. He turned to Captain Moore and said:

“I guess I’ll go over and see him.”

The two started aft. As they reached the quarterdeck Mary Ingleton happened to glance up from the cot on which Fitzgerald was lying. She jumped to her feet and rushed over to him, holding her hands out to Redmond.

“Oh! I’m so glad to see you, Howard,” she exclaimed. “I was worried to death about you while that dreadful fight was going on.”

Redmond was completely overcome by the warmth of her greeting, which he did not expect. He took her hands in his, but managed to hold himself in check.

“I’m so glad you’re glad, Mary,” he said.

His quiet reply dampened her enthusiasm, and she looked at him somewhat puzzled. Captain Moore had already gone ahead toward Fitzgerald, so they were left standing together. Redmond was the first to speak again.

"I was sorry to hear about Fitzgerald," he said.

"Yes," replied Mary, "he is seriously hurt."

"It must have been a great blow to you, Mary. I hope he will soon get well because you deserve happiness after all you have been through."

"Why, Howard!" she exclaimed. "How strangely you speak! I don't know what you are talking about."

"Aren't you and he engaged?" queried Redmond.

"Why no," laughed Mary. "Whatever put that silly notion in your head?"

"You're not?" he exclaimed in surprise.

She heartily laughed at his astonishment, then she replied.

"No! I'm not engaged to anyone," she said with a taunting air.

"Oh! Mary," he gasped haltingly.

"Yes, Howard."

"Oh! What can I say? I love you with all my heart. I've been dying to tell you for a long, long time, but I thought you were already engaged, and I didn't dare."

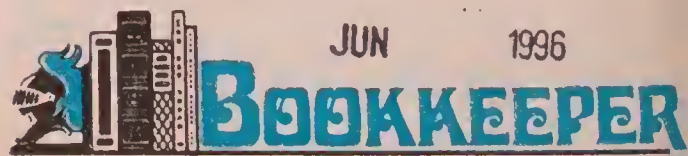
"Why you poor silly boy. I've known it for weeks," she said gently.

"Can you love me too?" he pleaded.

She looked at him teasingly, with laughter in her eyes, watching his evident anxiety. Then as the lines upon his face deepened she lowered her glance and said:

"I do."

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing Agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date:



JUN

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